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# A WINTER PICNIC

DICKINSON AND DOWD

HENRY HOLT & CO PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

27335  
JANUARY, 1888.

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# A WINTER PICNIC

*THE STORY OF A FOUR MONTHS' OUTING IN NASSAU,  
TOLD IN THE LETTERS, JOURNALS, AND TALK  
OF FOUR PICNICERS*

BY

J. AND E. E. DICKINSON

AND

S. E. DOWD



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1888



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"This country excels all others as far as the day excels the night in splendor : the natives love their neighbors as themselves : their conversation is the sweetest imaginable, and their faces are always smiling ; so gentle and so affectionate are they, that I swear there is no better people in the world."—JOURNAL OF COLUMBUS.

" You sail and you seek for the Fortunate Isles,  
The old Greek Isles of the yellow-bird's song ?  
Then steer straight on through the watery miles,  
Straight on, straight on, and you can't go wrong.  
Nay, not to the left ; nay, not to the right ;  
But on, straight on, and the Isles are in sight,—  
The Fortunate Isles, where the yellow-birds sing,  
And life lies girt with a golden ring."

—JOAQUIN MILLER.



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## BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

---

IT was a small party, only four all told. One was a comfortable invalid, very willing to be petted and made much of by the other three, who had, at no great sacrifice, undertaken the journey on her account. Two of them were busy people, somewhat worn by responsibilities, and eager to miss none of the possible delights of the expedition ; and last, but by no means least, was the Mother, who had reluctantly left her sixty-year-old Lares and Penates and committed herself to the discomforts of railway and steamboat traveling, for the sake of the invalid aforesaid.

It had been the hard lot of these four to be born and reared in a "temperate climate." Not that they were ungrateful for their mercies : they took what the gods provided, and made the best of it. Well they knew that they might have been created Esquimaux, and so have dragged out a slow existence upon train-oil, burrowing in a snow hut. How often had they been instructed that things might have been worse for them than they were ! But on one point they remained unreconciled : it seemed to them that they had far more *weather* in their part of the country than they needed. Western New York was indeed a highly favored region : they had no cyclones, no

freshets, no grasshoppers, no earthquakes ; they seldom saw the mercury sink into the " thirties below," and they had never ironed one end of a handkerchief while the other end froze. They did not buy milk by the pound ; nor had any frozen unfortunate been dug out of the snow within hearing of their neighborhood. On the contrary, they had fine sleighing, sometimes from November to April, and when they could not ride they could skate—if they chose ; or they could shut themselves into a furnace-heated house, and watch the " beautiful snow."

Such were their winter amusements ; and for summer, they had the deep mud, damp, chilly winds, and fleeting snow-storms of April ; the dismal rains of May, with a few milder airs interspersed ; an occasional Lowell day in June (" what is so rare ? ") when they did venture to " turn out the greenhouse " ; then came the blazing wet heat of July, and the blazing dry heat of August, both subject to constant variations of from twenty to forty degrees daily ; early frosts in September ; an October of Eden, though intermingled with cold blasts ; more frosts in November, when they counted the halcyon days on their fingers, and agonized over threatening frosts nearly every night, dressing the garden in newspapers to no purpose, a dozen times, only to be caught at last by the frost-fiend, who then descended upon them escapelessly for four or five months. What mortal can be harried over the thermometer in this fashion unconcerned ?

When the " heated term " came around, the two who formed the centre and backbone of the family



often ran away to the seashore for a few days. There were wild sea-breezes and warm land-breezes; sometimes it was cold, and sometimes hot. Always they wore thicker clothing on these excursions than at home. In an ordinary summer, their muslins and grenadines seldom emerged from their retirement, and though never positively ill, they often confessed themselves, in our significant northern phrase, "under the weather,"—and it was a grievous thing to be under.

Finally, in desperation at this state of things, the four rose up from their "hole in the floor" one shivering January, and fled a full thousand miles away. It seemed a long distance to go for a picnic; but Chicago is nearly as far from New York, and who minds going to Chicago? They left their furnace and their greenhouse, and alas! their shivering friends; they set forth in a sleigh for the Fortunate Isles; and during a few winter days they had passed the perils and pleasures (pains they had none) of a short sea-voyage, and settled themselves comfortably in a first-class hotel on a beautiful island, and under the English flag.

Never was such a transmigration of souls and bodies. One could well believe, sitting on those wide verandas from eight in the morning till eight at night, as the invalid did on the first day of her bewilderment, that nothing short of Aladdin's carpet could have wrought the change. The four questioned, and gazed, and drew long breaths of astonishment. Two of them wandered about continually, bringing back armfuls of mysterious floral loveliness; and then

they looked about them with a kind of despair. Where to bestow their goods? For the rooms, though beautifully cool and clean, were small; and the investigators' wish to "spread out," with the longing of the Mother for quiet and independence, and the invalid's objection to climbing even the easiest flight of stairs,—all these motives lead to a search for an independent establishment; and it was thus that the Picnic began.

The climate made a house scarcely necessary; indeed, many of the inhabitants of the favored isle lived in the merest apology for a house. The two investigators accordingly went prospecting for a four-months' home; and the story of their simple life is set forth in the following pages.

# A WINTER PICNIC.

---

## I.

### THE PLANNING OF THE BOOK.

“ ‘Of writing many books there is no end’ ;  
And I who have written much in prose and verse  
For others’ uses now will write for mine,—  
Will write my story for my better self,  
As when you paint your portrait for a friend,  
Who keeps it in a drawer, and looks at it  
Long after he has ceased to love you,—just  
To hold together what he was and is.”

THEY were sitting in the cosy drawing-room one evening, two weeks after their arrival on the island, when Beatrix suddenly broke out with the above quotation.

“I don’t see any occasion for your ‘dropping into poetry,’ but if you don’t wish to explain, it’s no matter.” Barbara had laid down her writing, and sat regarding Beatrix with something like a frown.

“Of course I wish to explain if you’ll only listen. I have a plan, a secret, a—call it what you will.”

“We are all ears,” said Benita, washing the scarlet lake from her brush, and examining her last touches with disapproving eyes.

“We must have an occupation,” began Beatrix.

“Occupation ! Who wants to be occupied ?” This

from Barbara. "We came here on purpose to be at leisure, to be rid of occupation ; besides, we shall find enough of occupation without seeking it."

"Wait till you've heard what I have to say. This is all to be in the way of rest,—play, if you like. We must write a book !" (Profound sensation on the part of the audience, who had been reinforced by the Mother.) "We have traveled, or voyaged, which is better, and here we are, with plenty of material at hand, and more time than we ever had in our lives before."

"But we don't know enough," sighed Benita, "and—"

"Who would publish it after it was written ?" inquired Barbara, practically.

The Mother added that she should think three such girls as she knew hers to be could do anything, if they only set about it.

"What woman has done, woman can do—*women* certainly. Have I answered that objection or not? Now for the second. Who will publish it? Why, Colt or Harpleton, of course. They publish all the best works. We'll settle on the Colts, I think," she ended grandly.

A gleam of enthusiasm flitted across the countenance of Benita for an instant. And Barbara embraced the opportunity of the momentary silence to throw another wet blanket,—a very wet one, she thought.

"If you write a book, you'll have to do it without my help. I can't write anything except letters. I never could."

"Just the thing," responded Beatrix. "They will make variety, don't you see? Write your letters, and my blessing go with you. I want whatever you or Benita can do the best, and all shall be grist that comes to our mill. Just what is needed is to have it ground properly. *I* will do the grinding."

"But I cannot give up my time for any such nonsense," dissented Benita. "I want to paint, and paint, and *paint*, till I have a sketch, at least, of every leaf and flower and fruit on this island. Moreover, I shall have no opportunity to gather the material you speak of. I could only write about Lemuel, and those schools I visited last week, and a few little things I have seen in the street, perhaps. What kind of a book would that make? The publishers wouldn't even look at it."

"Lemuel, and the schools, and a few little things you have seen on the street,—why, that will furnish variety. The thing is done—the manuscript is in the hands of the printer! We'll have a meeting in this room every two weeks to consult; we'll bring our material together, and talk it over. Barbara shall produce her letters, no matter if they *are* originally designed for home consumption, and after being read at our meetings go sailing over the sea to our frozen relatives,—why, all the better. We can call them back, and the local interest will increase the sale."

"An eye to business as well as fame," remarked Barbara.

"Benita shall write up 'Lemuel and the schools and the little things on the streets,' and I will follow meekly in the rear, and gather what scattering grains

you two let fall,—that is, if I have any strength left after prodding the other members up to their duty. We will have our first meeting one week from to-night, at precisely 7:30 P.M., and woe be to any member who comes empty-handed !”

The four met at the appointed time. The Mother had taken up a New York paper, and was reveling in the accounts of terrific storms that had visited the State just after the departure of the party. The three listeners detected a slight ring of triumph in the tone as the reading was resumed, and Beatrix went on :

“ Here we are, and here we shall remain for at least two months longer. We can study the flora and the fauna of the country, the habits of the people, and the advantages of a tropical climate. We can get at the very inward inwardness of things. There are three of us, and we can vary the book with our three different styles : if one doesn't suit, the other two may. The virtues of your combined pens, for instance, will so far overbalance the faults of mine that our readers will ignore the faults, and the thing will be a success. I don't mean to be disrespectful to the child of our affections when I say ‘thing.’ I refer to the scheme as a whole. You see we shall have three chances where most authors have but one. Think, too, how new a field it is,—not exhausted like Rome or Venice. As far as I can learn, there are only two books on the subject. I looked over the catalogue, and they certainly would have everything that has

been written on Nassau in Nassau's Library. Mr. Ives has produced an exhaustive work—"

"Exhausting, did you say?" inquired Barbara in a stage whisper.

"No, I did not," frowned Beatrix; "but it is too scientific for the general reader and too poetical for the prosy. Mr. Drysdale has given us a spicy, breezy book, and we shouldn't have been here but for him. Unfortunately he is a man,—so too is Mr. Ives, and they have given us the masculine side of the subject,—the fishing, boating, smoking, drinking (of cocoanut water) side of the question. Why cannot we give the feminine side,—the housekeeping, the costumes, the flowers, the hundred dainty bits that a man would never think of touching upon?—What will you present?" inquired Beatrix, turning to Barbara.

"Only my first circular letter that I am going to send off on the next steamer. I have that, if you insist upon hearing it."

"Oh, do read it! I know it is just what we want," said Beatrix, leaning back in her chair.



## II.

### GETTING TO THE ISLAND.

S. S. SANTIAGO, January 22, 1886.

DEAR FRIENDS ALL :—Do you not wonder how we broke away from the claims of suffering humanity, from our home friends, our flowers, our housekeeping? We wonder, too, as we review our month of preparation; but here we are, feeling—or at least two of us feeling—like school-boys at 4:15 of a Friday afternoon; or, better than that, as if the summer vacation had just begun. There was method in the madness of our packing. The five trunks were ranged in the upper hall, and there our dear M. A. showed conclusively that all the cunning of her fingers lay not in the beauty of form and color that she portrays upon canvas. How did she ever conjure our summer wardrobes into those trunks? Our pet pictures, our best beloved books, our silver, our Chinese vases and bronzes, and Japanese articles that money could not replace, and the cherished Amati, were put in the custody of friends, who promised to guard them as the apples of their eyes. We locked the piano and the bureaus; we knew that our trusty care-taker would not let the pipes burst, though if it were not for the water I should like to open the windows to all the winter zephyrs, just to see if cold has any effect

upon a carpet-bug. (Do you suppose that we must give the rest of our lives to the pursuit of this foe ?)

Think of my responsibility ! Besides the two great big trunks, the two middle-sized trunks, and one little wee trunk, we have a valise, a telescope with our Grenet and some chemicals in it, the care of which doth much afflict me, for I fear a breakage or a spillage of some sort ere yet our journey's done ; a hand-satchel, a shopping-bag, a shawl and wraps for four ; yes, and as far as New York we brought our Twinkle, who is to be petted by Miss E. P. till our return.

Arrived in New York, a rolling-chair took our invalid to the carriage-door, and we drove off to a down-town hotel ; but judge of our feelings when we found that the house was full, and there was no room for our party. Of course, we had to trundle back a mile or so, and there a good supper, blazing fire, and good beds restored us to a better frame of mind. Thursday morning was misty, moisty, and consequently cloudy ; but we donned our " stormy petrels," and sought out the *Santiago* in her dock, to find that the Bath chair had arrived, and also our baggage. Friends came. Miss P. was with us at two o'clock ; Mr. D. gave us half an hour of chat later ; and C. H.'s pleasant face was the last we saw as we left our native land at 3:15.

You cannot think how dispiriting it was. There was a solid mist everywhere, and occasionally a smart shower fell. We went crunching along through the ice in a manner that was decidedly harrowing to our feelings. We wanted to leave harbor hilariously, to watch the shores fade into the dim distance, to make

frivolous little remarks to each other according to our usual manner when on an outing. Instead of that, we sat with our feet on the pipes, and tried to keep from congealing, while an awful silence wrapped us round, along with our thick shawls. At dinner-time we were anchored off Staten Island, and as shortly after as was prudent we "turned in," each pair of us having carefully spread all the upper-berth blankets over our under berths, and supplemented their comfortable warmth by bags of hot water. At eleven o'clock the fog lifted, and a fresh start was made. We juniors might have had a good night's rest if we had not been so apprehensive about the others. As usual, forebodings were highly unnecessary, for they passed a pleasant, restful night, the Mother contrasting this new experience with a never-to-be-forgotten excursion upon the treacherous waters of Lake Erie, when death seemed to her the event most desirable.

Now, I am not going to describe the *Santiago* or the passengers,—fifty-four all told, in about the usual assortments,—but I will mention a few of them. Here are a portly judge and his gentle wife; a young man with bronchitis, and his robustious brother; a tired business man who has escaped from the bands of Wall Street, and has come away with his wife and ubiquitous boy for a well-earned outing; another worn-out man and his widowed mother; an elderly Scotchman with a young wife; some Cubans returning to their native land; the woman with weak lungs; another whose "nervous system is completely shattered," but whose diamonds are a marvel for profusion and size. Most of our voyagers go for pleas-

ure, I think, and I hope the pangs they now endure may be overbalanced by coming delights.

"Well, our day has gone," quoth the Mother, "and we're not drowned yet."

We are having a smooth sea, I hear them say, and your wishings are not in vain; for the good ship sails "fast and sure."

January 23.

Last night was lovely with light of moon and stars, so still that whenever we woke we could hear the whirr of the taffrail log, rods and rods behind us; the sound at first reminded us of a homeless cat. How we all slept! We woke early, Bee and I, and saw the eastern sky aglow; so we took a cup of coffee and a biscuit on our way through the dining-saloon, and went on deck to have a glorious sunrise all to ourselves. We found the doors wide open, and the airs of June about us. Can you realize it? See my date—January 23, if you please,—and then think of us in the open air, and, what is more, enjoying it! In the night we passed Cape Hatteras. We write, and read, and walk, and gaze at the wonderful sea and the wonderful sky, and breathe the delicious air that is hourly growing warmer. This is the ideal life, my friends,—just to go on forever, and never see land more.

After dinner the captain showed us our position on his map. We were opposite the boundary line between South Carolina and Georgia, and nearly through the Gulf Stream.

January 25.

Yesterday was Sunday, I suppose, but we had no

service of any sort. After lunch it began to rain in a feeble way, and at night a storm came on,—thunder, lightning, wind, rain, and of course much pitching and rolling of our ship. Nearly every lady on board was an inglorious prisoner in her state-room.

Nassau should have been sighted at 2 A.M. if all had gone well, and we should have been ashore by this time ; yet here we are still, steaming due south. How lovely it has been to-day !—Mrs. W. wears a cloth bonnet like her dress. It bears a ridiculous likeness to a ripe muskmelon. To-day she calmly remarked that it seemed pretty large, and she must take a reef in it, for she pitched into her berth with it on last night, and was “just too awfully wretched” to take it off till it was nearly ruined. “Just too awfully wretched” describes sea-sick people !

About nine o'clock we came in sight of Abaco, the most northerly of the Bahamas, and for hours we were in view of her waving palms ; then she vanished away, and left us to the wide ocean again. Our poor captain has been besieged all day by sick and anxious passengers who long for *terra firma*. I notice that he is non-committal, and there are reserves in his twinkling eyes when he says, “I *hope* we shall land to-night.” Yet everybody has packed up. A young girl from Nassau, who is returning to her home from a visit in America, has put on her cotton-velvet dress trimmed with fur ; her coral bracelets, rings, and pin are in place ; her pink cotton ribbons are bravely flying, yet I don't believe she will see her kindred to-night, for the Nassau light was not made out till

after dark. Then arose fresh clamor from the impatient passengers. "Why doesn't the pilot come?" queried one woman. "Can't we go ashore to-night, captain?" wailed another. "Certainly, madam, if you have faith enough to walk upon the water."

"I think such behavior is perfectly abominable in a pilot," said Mrs. B. emphatically. "He ought to be tarred and feathered at once. If I could only get at him, I wouldn't leave an eye in his head."

I quote these remarks only to show the demoralizing effects of illness upon an otherwise amiable and reasonable woman. And we,—we are only too glad to glide over the harbor bar in the daylight in a decorous and enjoyable manner.

January 26.

We did not anchor last night, but pitched and tossed about, and the weather was squally and threatening; therefore we bore invisible bruises for an hour or so, but what cared we? Before us lay Nassau, so near that we could see the hotel and the forts. Around us was the marvelous sea, over which there had indeed passed a change. The skies were wonderfully blue, and the water still more wonderful with its shifting colors.

A red flag floated from the lighthouse. The signal meant that we could not land, and so the pilot guided us around the island to what is called Cochran's Anchorage. About us were little coral islands,—or cays,—or keys, as you choose. A glorious end to our journey it proved, a two hours' ride of enchantment, past groups of tall cocoanuts with their waving

plumes, through light-green water barred with peacock blue and deep purple and pearly gray and a dozen other colors. Then the little "Nassau" came swiftly over the harbor, and received our trunks and ourselves. We bade a regretful good-bye to our good steamer, and soon stepped on to a wharf that appeared to have a firm foundation.

As strange as nature, pure and simple, was the crowd gathered there. The colored people, many of them in scantiest attire, had baskets or bundles of startling size on their heads, trays of familiar-looking vegetables and odd fruits. But no one seemed to want anything; they simply smiled all over if you looked at them, and gave you a "Good-evenin', Missis." Too short a drive followed. When we know it as well as our own village streets we shall doubtless try to recall the dazed condition in which we arrived at our destination. Sunshine lay all around the white streets, and yet it was not hot. Was this the cactus, the night-blooming cereus of our greenhouses, and the century plants that we had paid money to see at home, growing out of that white stone? Home! Where was home? Had we just stepped off from Aladdin's carpet?

We sat in the broad hotel court waiting for a room, and looked at the quiet crowd. A full-grown black man came up, and asked for a "copper." He was decently dressed, and when we merely stared at him, he broke into a laugh, and went off. We thought it was a queer joke. Several women wanted to do our washing. They did not persist, or urge their need of work. All of them were dressed in light prints, stiff



with starch. They appeared to be of quite another race from our Southern negroes, and they had a more sober and intellectual type of countenance.

We are at the Royal Victoria Hotel, "the cleanest and best hotel in the West Indies," so its advertisement says, and very clean and cool we find it. There are wide piazzas around the second and third stories, and wide halls, but no carpets, no stoves, hot-air pipes, furnace-grates, or even chimneys; *ergo*, no ashes, no furnace-dust, no superheated air, but in their stead the purest, sweetest, softest breezes that ever kissed the cheek since Eden was young. I even doubt whether any spot on earth, even Eden itself, was ever more blest than this little isle.

The architects of the Royal Victoria Hotel must have intended the rooms simply for sleeping and dressing purposes; for they put all possible space into the halls. Like Matthew Vassar when he built his college, they ignored the necessity of closets and wardrobes, and what few hooks they condescended to put up are high above my reach. It is not *their* fault, however, that the floors are so steep, and that the vast edifice seems to rock under my feet when I walk.

January 30.

We have a room away up, where we can gloat over a lovely view of the harbor and of Hog Island, which runs parallel with New Providence, and screens it from the north wind. Beyond lies the dark-blue of the ocean itself. The others have a room in the second story, overlooking a court. The Mother never tires of the changing scene. Huge ice-chests of provisions come off from our steamer; turtle, fish,

vegetables,—all kinds of commodities are brought into it constantly. Every morning after breakfast the court before the entrance is a scene of commotion. We take Benita around in her chair to watch the venders of shells, canes, sponges, candies, Spanish work, baskets, fruits of all sorts, and roses, roses, roses. Everybody wears them in a manner that would mean absolute ruin at home. Our first purchase was a soursop,—a green and prickly fruit that in shape and color resembles a small Hubbard squash. It has seeds as large as a watermelon, and the seeds are done up in a tough but juicy pulp as white as milk ; it is slightly acid, yet more sweet than sour, with a flavor of its own which is entirely indescribable. With ice, sugar, and water it was far superior to lemonade, and I know we shall all clamor for it presently.

Bee and I “strambled” off directly after dinner on that first day. We *oh’d* at every step. One said, “What is that?” and the other said, “Don’t ask *me*! How do you suppose *I* know?” For, just think of it, there isn’t a single tree, or shrub, or flower here that we ever saw before except in a greenhouse, or bedded out in our few weeks of immunity from frost. Think of poinsettias in the open air ; crotons as large and thrifty as our currant bushes ; the hibiscus as large as our quince-trees ; bananas in full bearing ; cocoanuts towering away up into the air ; and the big silk-cotton ! The ageratum grows by the roadside, and so do cunning little four-o’clocks, and, O dear friends, you never saw any roses worthy of being named by the side of their kindred here ! We constantly see the Duchesse de Brabant, Lamarque, Marechal Niel,

La France, and Malmaison, besides many that are nameless to us at present. Do you suppose we shall ever learn all these new things?

Led by some unerring instinct, we went over the hill to Grant's Town, and there we threaded narrow lanes among the cabins of the negroes. All the walls were festooned with luxuriant creepers, all the roadsides thickset with new and nameless beauties. About each cabin, no matter how small and mean, rose

"a circling row  
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,  
Blossoms and fruit at once,"

just as Milton says was the way of Eden. Every one salutes us with "good-mawnin', missus," or else it is "good-evenin'." I grieve to say that the cry of backsheesh rises here, but the beggar is not often clamorous. We have seen sapodillas, and they are brown and rough, reminding one of little russet apples; they too have watermelon seeds in them; their flesh is sweet and rich. We mean to like them extremely.

We took a drive on Wednesday afternoon, and such a drive! They have a fashion of going at full speed here, and as pedestrians invariably walk in the middle of the street, our driver was continually crying, "Look out there, look out!" The English custom of turning to the left is also prevalent. I wonder if the driver did not think we were a quartette of escaped lunatics. We used every known expression of pleasure, surprise, longing, and regret, as we were whirled past hedges and gardens and groves. Our eyes ached with the effort to receive and remember. The next day we

went in the opposite direction, with a steadier and more intelligent pilot. We saw sights that were new and strange, of course, and entirely different from those of the previous day. Our driver was most obliging, pointing out the sea-grape to us, and gathering cocoa-plums. Patiently, though very desirous to know "what the ladies use dose tings for in de Norf?" he waited while I stepped down and selected my own ferns from several acres of *Pteris aquilina*, that cosmopolitan of the Filices. I was charmed with it, for not only were the lovely green fronds in absolute perfection, but abundant among their freshness was last year's growth in perfection of form, but with colors changed to gray, and lavender, and different shades of brown. The effect was astonishing; yet another thing was more astonishing. Did I not gaze up into tall trees, and see pineapple plants perched all over them like sparrows in our maples? And did I not inveigle Simons into rushing off into the woods in his carpet-slippers to bring me an air-plant for my very own? It has buds, and is flourishing.

Barbara folded her letter and helped herself to a banana.

"You will continue, won't you, Benita," said Beatrix, "and give us a full account of that first week?"

"Oh, *you* can write up these few days,—I must paint every minute that I have to spare. It makes me almost crazy to see so many new flowers, and I haven't done a landscape yet."

"But we don't know much about your hotel life. We were out nearly all the time, you know, hunting

houses and furnishing, or trying to make some one else furnish this one. There must be interesting things laid up in your memory that we never even heard about," remonstrated Barbara.

"It *is* almost too bad," said the Mother, "to dismiss that fine hotel so curtly. A lady told me one day that it cost a quarter of a million of dollars, and I believe it. It is a splendid affair, and it seems as if you ought to speak of its form,—built like a ship, you know. When we used to sit in the dining-room, I fancied myself on our steamer, with good Captain Colton in command."

"Only it was good Mr. Morton instead," said Benita. "How kind he was to us! I felt personally grateful to him for his pleasant words and genial manners, and how smoothly he made everything run!"

"Yes, if ever a hotel in this world possessed a good housekeeper," said the Mother, "that one does. Can this family ever forget their first Nassau dinner? To be sure, we could not eat thirty kinds of fish and a dozen kinds of bread."

"And puddings with brandy sauces," put in Bee, who likes to shock the strong temperance principles of the Mother now and then.

"Such quantities of ice-water too," went on the Mother, "although they have to bring the ice from Maine. And those delicious oranges for breakfast and dinner!"

"I shall always eat them with a spoon when we reach home," announced Benita, "just to show that we have been to the West Indies."

"Provided you can get such oranges," remarked Beatrix, "which you know is impossible."

"What else did we have for dinner that day?" asked Barbara; "I can't remember."

"Why, fresh, crisp lettuce, new potatoes, Bermuda onions, and a good many other dainties. And have you forgotten the roses?" went on the Mother, leaving an exclamation point after roses, as she always did when she mentioned them, "vases full of the beauties on every table, and pinned on to everybody, regardless of cost."

"Didn't cost much," said Beatrix. "I told you you should have your fill of roses, and you are not disappointed, are you?"

"I've had enough," said the Mother, with a sigh of intense delight in the subject under discussion, "I've had enough to last me a lifetime. Yes, that week was as pleasant as any week could be—spent in a hotel. The people were so kind and attentive."

"And I shall never forget how delightful those broad piazzas were, and how the earlier comers sympathized with us on account of the cold weather in Nassau,—such a winter had never been known,—while all the time we were luxuriating in it, breathing in the life-giving air. And those two drives," went on Benita, "first to the east and then to the west, where we saw such ferns, such aloes, such trees and flowers as need a botanist to describe. I wrote a bit in my diary about that second drive. Perhaps you'll want it for the book?" ventured the modest Benita.

"Of course we shall. Do read it," said Beatrix.

And the artist read:

"We went to the west to-day, where glimpses of the harbor through rifts in the hedge of sea-grape

enchanted the whole party beyond the power of words. Never had they expected to see bananas and pine-apples growing in native soil. Now this felicity came to them ; for, planted in deep holes, which the driver said were natural to the island, were the broad leaves of the former, surging out like great billows over the rim ; and they saw the latter, with deep rose centres where the apple was beginning to form, growing helter-skelter in the rough rock, and apparently deriving their nourishment from a thin layer of red soil. The driver was good-naturedly indulgent to our whims, and obligingly drew up his horse to a big tree whose branches were loaded with air-plants, while I got out my pencil, and sketched it on the outside of an old envelope, the inside being already mortgaged."

"I'm sure I don't see why that can't go in just as it is," remarked Beatrix, with great satisfaction.

"You ought to tell how many servants there were at the hotel," added the Mother.

"How many?" asked Benita.

"A hundred, more or less," said the Mother ; "but they had an easy time of it, I know, and they had their own table in that large room out of the court, and their meals were prepared for them."

"Of course they had to eat, like other people," said Barbara. "And what fun it was to watch the wheelbarrow loads of handsome fishes prepared for cooking, and the great turtles, with curious shells."

"I don't think the flesh looked very good as they took it out, but it tasted well enough when it was once cooked. I wonder if it's true that there is a



portion resembling every variety of meat? Some of the steak I couldn't have told from venison. Then I used to like to watch the huge ice-chests from the steamer, drawn by six negroes, and opened right under my eyes, so that I could see the stores of beef and other things from New York. How strange it is that Mr. Morton brings oranges for hotel use from Florida. I wonder why he does it?"

"Because these people do not sell by the quantity," explained Barbara. "A 'heap' of eight or twelve oranges would hardly be enough for a dinner, at the rate people ate them."

### III.

#### THE FLITTING.

February 6, 1886.

A week has gone by, dear friends,—and just after my last writing we began to feel cramped and uncomfortable. We couldn't all sit in either room on account of trunks. We had no place to store our gatherings from sea and shore. We had no garden. There was no place for Benita's easel. We liked the hotel and all about it, but we sighed for a home where we could unpack. We wanted our invalid on the ground floor, and we decided, not exactly to camp out, but to find an abiding-place where we could live in comfort in the heart of the island city, and with greater independence than before. We didn't want to have a tramp, or drive, or sail, spoiled by an inexorable meal-time. Bee (that's Beatrix) rushed into the fray of house-hunting—but I will not enter into many of the details that were so interesting to us and so full of quiet fun, for I should be bankrupted by eight-cent postage-stamps. This much, however, I must tell. One morning we walked up a narrow street and were confronted by a small card that bore the welcome legend, "House to Let."

"*There* it is at last," said Bee, but I replied bitterly that doubtful things were uncertain.

"Of whom can we inquire about this house?" said Beatrix briskly.

"I own the house," replied the shopkeeper, very leisurely. "Would you like to see it?"

"Yes, if you please."

"Do you wish to see it to-day?"

"If you please," said Bee, so very quickly that the man winked and stared: yet he called Jane to mind the shop, and we followed his slow footsteps to the vacant cottage. How meekly we looked at the rooms and the premises generally! How we nodded to each other when the proprietor's back was turned, for surely this place must have been waiting for us. Within ten minutes we had the refusal of it, and were on our way to dinner.

We grudged the hour that day in the pleasant dining-room, and skipped quickly through the bill of fare that we might canvass Nassau as to housekeeping appliances.

"Where are the furniture shops?" we asked.

"There are none."

"No furniture shops! Then how do people ever go to housekeeping, please?"

"Oh, they either import their furniture, or else have it made to order."

Shades of Job! We are to stay here only ten weeks, and to begin by waiting for our furniture! We pondered upon the sophistication of humanity, the golden days of the Arab, the Indian, and other children of nature, and we wildly canvassed the subject of hammocks, and wondered if we *could* use cot beds by any possibility. All the time we went on

searching the shops, and finally we unearthed two iron bedsteads : but springs there were none, nor any such thing as a mattress. And yet we were not daunted. Our picnic must be made a reality. Men, we said, can be content in small rooms ; they have nothing to hang up worth speaking of, but when a woman has to keep her fig-leaves in a trunk, she bids adieu to peace. By dint of persistent inquiry we found a colored man who promised to construct two mattresses and four pillows by Monday night,—“ and I knows Americans means *business*. I works for 'em often, and I always puts on steam and does as I agrees,” said he. This same carpenter made us a square pine dining-table, a table for our drawing-room, a sort of dressing bureau—just ends and shelves—and we found five chairs and a rocker and two other tables. Lumber is all imported, and therefore expensive. In the street one morning we saw a side yard piled full of boxes, and instantly a bright idea struck one of us. They were empty liquor-boxes, but we considered them from our point of view, and deliberately bought seven of them with which to complete our furnishing. We set a seamstress at work upon sheets, pillowcases, and table-cloths ; and such a chase as we had for table furnishings ! The fancy of Beatrix was taken captive by some plates decorated with clematis *Jackmanii*,—life size—closed gentians, also large as life, and flaming red foliage. Immediately she set her heart upon making them the key-note of our harmonies in *faience* ; but the aforesaid clematis plates came from a wreck, and as they were scattered through all the shops of the place, it was our task to gather up enough to

adorn our modest board. To our lasting grief we were finally obliged to buy a china milk-pitcher. Miles and miles we walked to secure the absolute necessities for our camp life. Not a bright or un-rusted tin teapot could we find, nor a pepper-box, nor a first-class lamp. We bought British salt in glass cans, rice from India for five cents per quart, butter from New York at forty-two cents a pound, and oh, think of it, dear housekeepers!—we can buy *two crackers* for a cent. They come from New York along with the butter, I suppose. We smile as we think that in our native land we scorned crackers which were not hot from the oven, but now—what was Sidney Smith's twelve miles from a lemon to nine hundred and sixty miles from a cracker? And we can't buy a kernel of roasted coffee! The raw berry costs us twelve cents a pound, and we find a cheap consolation in the fact.

So now, dear home people, think of us as settled "in our own hired house," as the Mother often says with a look of deep content; for just one week after landing we gathered ourselves into this dear little cottage, unpacked our trunks, hung up our gowns, spread everything out, and settled down to the joy of "eventful living." We have not rested much, but when everything is in running order, you will hear of four very idle B's in this hive, just how and where they idle, and all the minutiae of their daily doings. With pity we mention your beloved names,—pity because you are not basking in the rest and sunshine of Nassau,—Nassau the Beloved, Nassau the Incomparable.

#### IV.

##### THE HOUSE OF PICNICS.—THE ISLAND CITY.

February 20, 1886.

AND now, I must show you our delightful little dwelling. Those of you who have Mr. Drysdale's book will see just a corner of it on page 11, the third house from the stairs, on the right side. On page 31 is another view. You can identify it by the dormer windows, and you can see how near we are to the residence of "His Excellency, the Governor of the Bahamas."

First, then, the edifice is of stone; it stands directly upon the street, and its wide veranda is enclosed by what Mr. D. calls "jealousies." Some open in two divisions like shutters, and the unhinged ones have movable slats. Here hangs the hammock of Beatrix. Double doors open into our drawing-room, which is long, and wide, and high. The beautiful floor of yellow pine has its broad expanse broken by three long palmetto mats, which come from the out-islands, and are a great institution. Do you see our broad, low divan upholstered with pretty red and olive cretonne? Three of our rough boxes made the foundation of that comfortable affair, and Benita's pine-needle pillow caps the climax. The wall-paper is very much of a worry to us—or *was*. We curtained our windows with

thin white stuff, along the border of which we sewed a strip of gay rose-colored cretonne, extreme simplicity and small outlay being our watchwords. We made gay covers to our pine tables; we put up shelves; we curtained one obnoxious door; we gathered palmettos and with them made curious figures on the walls; we put up black-eyed Susans, sea-feathers and sea-fans; we piled shells and corals in a corner. Here are water-color sketches in groups, plaques of flowers and Cape Ann photographs, for not in vain did we bring multitudinous brass-headed tacks and a hammer. Our little easels stand about on tables and shelves, and they are occupied by your shadowy forms. You smile serenely upon us, Miss E., and methinks I hear you speak "across the chasm." Paul Foster's black eyes gaze fixedly at us from where he stands between his progenitors. We look at Miss A. and long for her skilled hand, when every turn discloses new wonders and beauties that mock all our feeble efforts at portrayal. We look at Clericus and wish he were ordered here to rest until next year. You are all a comfort to us daily, and help us to hold together what we were and are. Here you will see, if your real selves will come, that Christmas bag with water-lilies all cunningly wrought; the olive-and-cardinal affair that one of you made earlier, and the bag that came to us last of all. You will see our pet silver vase and the blue bamboo, our Japanese pomegranate, and other of our household gods which we could not leave behind. Our California blanket overspreads one steamer chair and a gorgeous towel tops the other. The four wide window-sills hold magazines,

books, papers, work, paints and flowers ; and so the wall-paper is completely vanquished by our genius.

Two double doors open from this family room into the sleeping-apartment of us, the juniors. Here we made for ourselves a wardrobe curtained about by more of the rosy chintz. Our great dressing-bureau was evolved from a big and little box ; each fitted up with shelves and bravely clad in flowery attire.

Here is that pretty lace toilet-set of yours, dear Mrs. H., and the dressing-cases that were such an especial comfort on the voyage. I do not see how I am ever going back to a bureau after this luxury ! Do I not remember how my small articles were always escaping overboard at the back of the drawers on the slightest provocation ? How the handles used to twist, and then send out the drawers and their contents with an uncomfortable jerk in which I shared !

Back of our large bed-room is a small dining-room opening into a little garden of roses and other flowers. The parroquets, dear shining birds in coats of green, hop about on the sills in search of crumbs, and sometimes fly in at the open windows. Here we have white shades and a simple kind of lambrequin made from a four-cent red stuff that Trix dubs the Psyche drapery. A branch of bitter oranges hangs on the wall, and a cluster of "singing tree" pods ; also licorice pods, and pods that are long, short pods, round pods, smooth pods and prickly pods, long trails of climbing sedge, and leaves of the air-plant. Shallow baskets of fruit are on the "sideboard" (I don't repudiate that word at all. The thing is made of boards, and it stands at the side of the room.)



Across the square hallway where the stairs are, is the other bed-room, with its two windows opening into the "well-garden" in which roses and violets grow,—yes, and bananas and oranges, too. The well is exactly in the middle. We go up two stone steps to a circular stone eight feet in diameter, wherefrom arises the curb. We lean over it and look down past fringing ferns into the clear water of fifteen feet below. The well looks as if it had been made by a large dibble when the rock was soft, and it is a strange fact that the water rises and falls with the tide! Sometimes there is an abundance of it, and then again it is almost gone.

Out of the hall we pass into a covered wooden way that leads to a great stone kitchen on the rear of the small premises. This wooden part has two rooms. In the one next the hall we have set up a double-barreled kerosene stove *with* an oven. This room has a long table, shelves, cupboards, etc., all very convenient, you see. In the next room we keep a few stores, and then comes Beersheba, long and high. It has six windows and two doors: it has a hearth and a brick oven across one end, but the hearth is like a high brick table. Upon it we set a charcoal brazier, just as the natives do, our bake-kettle, our tea-kettle, and all our cooking appointments, and we build just as many charcoal fires as we think proper. Ah, me! what ages of culinary rites must have been solemnized on that generous shrine,—for the rafters are inky black with the soot and smoke of generations past. There is no uncomfortable heat in this ample

space, I notice, and the odors all rise into the yawning throat of the big chimney.

This is the land of easy-going, of procrastination, of shiftlessness. Bee hired a clever native carpenter, and for a day and a half she kept him busy with refractory bolts and bars, with jalousies that needed "easing," and bits of tinkering that add so much to family comfort, while I undertook the necessary purifications. I engaged an ebony maid of fourteen to wash windows. She came in a flounced skirt of pink gingham, a white merino basque trimmed with Spanish lace, an embroidered handkerchief pinned around her neck with a gorgeous emerald brooch, rings on her fingers and rings in her ears. She did not arrive on the scene of action till half-past ten, and at half-past three she remarked, "I guess I won't work any moah to-day, Missus." In the mean time she had walked on tiptoe and worked very industriously upon *six* windows; but all the result perceptible was vast quantities of whiting in the corners of the panes, and much whiting and water upon the floors. Did I not long for the swift feet and deft hands of our own little Mollie?

Much like a castle is our abode, and I shall not be surprised if we come upon a moat and drawbridge in our future explorations. Before we go to our nightly slumbers, Bee and I make the rounds, and shove twelve big bolts, ten medium-sized bolts, four little bolts; we lock three doors, we hook seven hooks, and we turn eight buttons! These are not *all* our securities, but only those ordinarily used. And all our locks are wrong-side-up!

I haven't told you a word about the general aspect of Nassau and the little isle of New Providence upon which it is built. If Holmes called the British Isles "but a freckle," what is there small enough for this? A coral island, you know it is, like all the Bahamas—and hereafter please ignore Webster utterly and say *Ba-hah-mas*—and though it is one of the smallest, it is the most important of them by its harbor; it is the place from which the other islands ship most of their produce. There is a low range of hills less than a quarter of a mile back from the water, and in the narrow space between lies the sleepy little town of Nassau. Bay Street follows the curvings of the shore, and is crowded with most of the business places, shops of all sorts, houses, cabins, etc., "for three miles and a quarter," says the "*Almanack Guide to the Bahamas*," which lies beside my plate at table, as impeachable testimony when varying evidence has been given us. The main business part of the town is within a quarter of a mile of us, and so are the five churches. There's a small open square by the principal quay, planted with almond-trees and lilies. Mr. Drysdale says there's an acre in it, and just for the fun of pinning an error upon him, I stepped around it yesterday and found it much smaller; but it is very pleasant. Back of this place—Rawson Place it is called—are the public buildings, "forming three sides of a quadrangle." The one in the rear is quite imposing, with a lofty portico, which of course is supported in the usual manner by high columns. This is the most interesting one of the lot, for it contains the post-office, our only means of

contact with the outer world. Think what a fortnightly mail means, if you can! It means rest from the hooting engine that shrieks, and groans, and sends forth blood-curdling whoops in the hours when we fain would slumber. It means, to be sure, that we cannot rush into a city a dozen times a day if a need of any earthly sort befalls us, but here, picnicking, our needs have grown beautifully less. All means of travel await our word of command, so we are never *left*, and that is a gain.

Nobody can pop in unexpectedly with mother-in-law, nurse and children; neither can they wire to us that they are coming, for there is not even a cable; and if there were, people do not lightly take mid-winter voyages. There are no book agents, no piano-tuners,—though I really wish the piano in the house adjoining had any of its keys in tune, for Bee's ham-mock reveries are woefully disturbed by its complaints.

How I wander! Parallel with Bay Street is Shirley Street, which at a little distance east of us crosses another at right angles, and a little further north it takes a different name. Shortly after it has still another and goes meandering on like some of the tortuous ways in Boston. I suppose these streets are on the bed-rock (may be that term isn't geologically correct), and they are as smooth as our cellar floors, and white—too white for the eyes, I should think. All the buildings of any size are of quarried coral limestone, though I doubt if I should say quarried, when a man sits down on a bench and draws a cross-cut saw lazily through a mass of stone, with as much apparent

facility as a grocer cuts cheese. These blocks are laid up into houses, and they have built others into thick high walls all around their gardens. As if it were not mean enough to build walls and solid gates, they crown their fortifications with broken bottles, which would make an unendurable ugliness, if various plants had not settled there and done their best to cover the disgrace. Above the high walls we see branches of glistening foliage, clustered roses, fronded palms, but not all their barriers can keep in the odors of the jasmine and the orange. I suppose people live in these castles, but rarely do we see any signs of life. We go in and out constantly, yet in this whole month we have not seen a white person enter or leave a house on this street; indeed we have come to the conclusion that all the active life of the place is carried on by the negroes. What do these secluded women do? On Sundays they step decorously to church, looking so prim and proper that I half think that I am in England. They are not pretty, they are not well dressed—to American eyes; but what would become of us if we depended upon London, or upon a fortnightly communication with New York; and how do they amuse themselves, with no shopping, no driving to speak of, no walking that we know of? I see no pleasure parties either on land or water. There is the weekly hop at the hotel, to which some of the upper class are invited; there are receptions at the Government House sometimes; there have been two concerts, but they seemed to have levied upon foreign talent rather largely, to judge from the newspaper reports. Perhaps the climate

has been too much for their energies, and they find unending bliss in seclusion and indolence.

Lest this dire result overtake us, as prophesied, we have been out constantly, Trix and I, like a pair of insatiate interrogation points. We go to the post-office, we go to market, and I've no doubt we shock notions of propriety every day. Simply to sit behind our jalousies is an amusement of which we never weary—and we never shall weary.

In our hotel week, with the prospect of a long picnic before us, you may be sure we kept our eyes and ears open to the "tricks and manners" of the African as a servant, and our brisk, thrifty, stirring housekeeper seemed averse to opening Beersheba for a turbaned cook, although dozens of them beset us as we went back and forth. We scrambled into our house as the first move, and then we reflected at length. An endless stream of dusky people pressed in at our side gate, peered curiously into our dining-room, and walked in at the back door. "It is unendurable," said Beatrix, and padlocked the gate.

We found that we could procure anything cooked or uncooked from the hotel ; that Cora, the cook of our next neighbor, would prepare our meals if we wished, and we postponed the servant question indefinitely, for the care of the house is next to nothing. The streets are swept daily, and there is no dust. We use the broom at long intervals, but it costs little effort to sweep a bare floor, while as to dusting we entirely omit that disagreeable exercise, because there is no earthly reason for it. Never did I so

realize the slavery of our northern homes—how we crowd our rooms with furniture and stuff them with every possible thing that is useless, and make them fuzzy with carpets to the joy of the prowling buffalo bug, and the ruin of our respiratory organs.—How I wander from the track ! but it's the spell of tropical life that makes me careless even of closing my letter.

As to servants, we elected a boy to take Benita about in her chair, to do our errands, and to be our " butler boy." Tried and found wanting was the agile Bankey, and to him succeeded Lemuel—a boy of less pretensions to elegance, but thus far he has proven himself honest and willing. Whether he will ever attain any just ideas of punctuality, or any conception of time, remains to be seen.

So, on the simple basis of independence, we began to housekeep. About seven o'clock we hear the bell of the baker's man, and buy a loaf of excellent bread and some rolls. We commence our breakfast with oranges, bananas, sapodillas—of which we have become very fond—or other fruit. This morning our main meal was composed of hominy, fried plantain, baked eggs, and stewed potatoes. Wasn't that enough? Frances, the window washer, came to ask if I should want her on Monday, " please Gawd." We went down to market and bought a cent's worth of pepper, rolled up in a little cornucopia, all ready for a customer; a pound of butter—we hang it down the well in a pail—a quart of meal, four cents; half a pound of ham for twelve cents; five shallots, six cents; two

lemons, one cent ; four oranges, six cents, and one head of lettuce, six cents. A woman called out as we passed, "Oh, I got something nice foh you dis mawnin', my dear Missus." We bargained for baskets, and the damsel said, "I bring 'em to you nex Wednesday, if life speared. My father old and weak, he have no wife, and I his onliest chile."

The market people—all colored, of course—stand or sit around the outside of three square, open buildings, with their pitifully small stocks exposed for sale on the counters before them, and it is droll enough to walk along and ask questions. At one corner stands Aunt Peace, a very substantial matron brought from Africa long ago ; "befo' I got dese teef," is as near the time as she can state it. A flaming turban covers her head ; a little braid of wool hangs down before each ear. She is a Nango, but all questioning avails not as to the home of that race ; like many others, she has parallel scars upon her cheeks—a mild sort of tattoo, I suppose. She wears a blue checked gingham dress, and over it an apron of coffee-sacking. Aunt Peace has fruit to sell, small heaps of oranges, tomatoes, lemons, limes, a cocoanut or two, a few beans in a shallow basket, and one Jamaica apple. No fruit is sold by measure, or in any quantity, nor vegetables either. Everything is piled in little heaps, as I said, usually three or four oranges, four shallots, etc., though the number seems to depend on size and scarcity. A piece of cocoanut shell often holds two small tomatoes, half an onion, three or four bird peppers, and some pot herbs, all for one cent, or copper, as they say. I see so many of



these collections and so many okras, that I feel sure the natives live in great part on soup.

As to meats, the market is rather unsatisfactory, the choice limited, and the prices high, but tinned goods are plentiful and excellent. It is fortunate that we care so little for flesh, and that we do like fish, which is both abundant and cheap. We used to select from a bewildering array of at least fifteen varieties when we lived at the hotel. We get enough "to our dinner" for four cents. They never weigh them!

For our mid-day meal to-day we had mutton chops, mashed "eddies," stewed tomatoes, oranges, sapodillas, and sponge cake; for supper, tea, rolls, lamb's tongue, sorrel jam, guava marmalade, and pound-cake. I must explain that the eddy looks like a caladium. Had I seen them growing I would never have tasted them, good as they are. Sorrel is a red prickly fruit, and the jam tastes like red currants, only more delicious. We all have famous appetites, and there are fewer angles apparent than formerly upon some of our party.

It is one of our mild delights to sally forth, asking "nothin' of nobody" as to the direction, and so follow the example of Columbus, whose statue on the Governor's stairs is so near to us that we always feel as if he kept watch and ward over our bed-room. To-day we saw bamboo—"wild cane," they call it—and many unknown plants, for which they have comical names, such as "skipping-rope," "guinea-peas," "monkey-plant," "all-day," "pipe-shanks," and "chew-stick." They sell one-cent bundles of the latter in market, and Lemuel says "de Af'kins use it

for deir teefs," that is to say, they chew one end into splinters and use it as a brush. The colored people rushed to the doors to gaze at us, and also, alas, to beg! An old crone called after us, "Oh, you not prospah, you not lucky—you fall down 'cause you not give me no money!" But ordinarily they seem to beg as a matter of mere habit, and take their poor luck with good-nature. Cecelia Kelly, who was eating green tamarinds and salt, followed us half a mile, along with Jer'miah and Villy Ed'ard Owen, all trotting quietly in our wake, and only speaking when spoken to, in low-toned answers.

"What is that great building yonder?" I asked of Villy.

"Dot's de ja-ul," he replied in awe-struck accents.

"Are there many people in it?"

"Oh, plenty, mum," and Cecilia added:

"Dem wot steals wears blue and wite, and dem dot sweers wears all wite."

I have not told you yet that there are three towns over the hill, where only the negroes live. To be sure, they also live in Nassau, but they reign supreme in Grant's Town, Bain's Town, and Delancy's Town. These coalescing settlements are crowded with cabins of various sizes, all embowered in tall trees. Often the roof is a thatch of palmetto-tree leaves, and shutters ordinarily take the place of glass windows. There are broad, smooth roads at intervals, and between them are narrow lanes, where the stones look as if they had recently been dumped there for a MacAdam. Eleven thousand people live in Nassau and its suburbs; three-fourths of them are colored.

The wildest variety prevails in regard to dress ; every scrap of cloth is utilized, washed till it is in tatters, and worn as long as it will hold together, for the colored people are dreadfully poor, and very likely shiftless and improvident. Market-women wear six brass rings on one finger, and ear-rings long and gay of color are universal. At first we could scarcely understand them, and they would patiently repeat and explain till we comprehended.

There is no grass-producing land here ; therefore few cows, and therefore little milk. Hence we are reduced to the condensed article, which I do not like ; but, said the Mother, firmly, " Paul Foster is the best boy I ever knew ; he was brought up on condensed milk ; and as he is so good you ought to take it gladly. If you don't like it, it must be your natural depravity." Thus harangued, I say no more, but console myself with my favourite gold-bowled spoon, and just as little milk as possible in my coffee, but find abundant satisfaction elsewhere.

For one thing, dear friends, your fancy does not, can not paint for you the relief of being delivered from weather. Weather at home, you know, means only something disagreeable ; it means change always, and usually a change for the worse, while here we go on with exactly the same temperature day and night. For two evenings after we moved in that we were glad of the warmth of our kerosene stove. They say it has not been so cold before in fifty years, and they mildly apologize for it, and try to excuse what seems delightful to us.

It rains sometimes for an hour or so, and then I

always go and hold my head under the eaves as I did when I was a little girl. The splashing of the warm water takes me back to a certain old farm-house, and I hear again the distressed tones of my grandmother raised in expostulation. Regularly every morning somebody announces the day of the month, and often somebody else refers to snow-shoveling, furnaces, frozen ears, and other themes of purely arctic interest. In fact, escape from the tyranny of winter has made us light-hearted,—“utterly frivolous,” Benita says. Never before was there, I admit, so much fun and nonsense apparent in the B. family ; but why shouldn't we be just as frivolous as we choose? Our chief interest in the outward world is to know from you that Flo and Willie were skating, and that Kenneth has a tooth. (A woman, not colored, told me the other day that her baby “is gitting out his top teeth.”) How can I say good-bye? Writing these things for you has been almost like speaking out to you across land and sea, and seeing your dear faces full of interest beaming back upon us ; and so God keep you all, we pray.

“Won't that make them open their eyes? Every mother's son and daughter of them will want to come to Nassau and go to housekeeping.” And Beatrice turned to Benita saying, “I suppose you are prepared to-night with a contribution.”

“I have written mine by proxy this time,” said Benita, “or rather I have obtained the material by proxy. The Mother confided to me this morning that she thought it a shame for ‘those girls’ to leave

out all the queer things that she saw in the court of the hotel ; they were just the *kind* of things people wanted to know. Suppose they should come to the Bahamas ; wouldn't they want to understand how to prepare turtles ? So I told her that if she had seen anything new and strange she should tell me, and I would write it down as her contribution. She agreed to that as a fine division of labor, and here is what she told me."

"A good arrangement," said Barbara. "It will make variety in our book, our *Liber Primus*."

"Don't be unpleasant, Barbara," begged Bee, "but Mother shall have her full share of the glory. Let's hear what she says about turtles."

"I haven't finished it yet."

"I know it will become immortal," said Bee, gazing with admiration at the head of the household. "You must go down to the fish-market with us some day. If there's one place more than another that I delight in, it's the fish-market. I'm always teasing Barbara to go with me, but she has an unfortunate dislike to it for some reason."

"Smells !"

"Yes, I know, but it's the salt, salt sea, and if you can make up your mind to it, you don't dislike it."

"Where is the fish-market?" asked Benita. "I must have Lemuel take me there some day."

"Listen and you will know. It is just behind the other market, a long, shed-like building near the water's edge. They were cleaning house when we went down this morning, and we waited till the movable slat floor had been taken up, swept off, and replaced over

the clean earth. I could stand an hour and look down into the fishing-boats, drawn up close to the side. Each one is built with a tank in the middle, and there, in the clean sea-water, the poor doomed fishes swim about till somebody wants to buy. I don't mean to say that all the fishes are bought in this way, for the counters are full of them. Men were pouring water over them this morning to keep them fresh and flapping. If I were a fish I should wish to be kept in a tank till my time came. The fishermen kill them with a stick, a kind of pancake turner, I should judge, striking the poor things till they are dead. One fisherman held up the loveliest angel-fish this morning! I would have bought it for Benita to paint, only there was no one to bring it home. They know us in the market now, and if they have any thing new or strange, they call our attention to it. A man showed us the queerest thing shaped like a beechnut, with a dark spotted skin, no scales, and two short white horns, where the head was supposed to be. 'Why, it looks like a cow,' I said to Barbara.

"So it is, missus, so it is," the man answered. 'Cow-fish, verra good eatin', missus. Want to buy him, missus? Only two cents?'

"Isn't it strange that they always say 'cents' when they speak to us, as if we didn't know anything about their money? I never lose a chance to retort, however, so I replied:

" 'A penny is a large price for so small a fish.'

" 'Take him for a ha' penny, missus. He good eating, missus, verra!'

"Those lovely-colored fishes do not come into

market very often. I wonder if they are not all bought up by the shell-workers? I wish we could get one."

"Have some of the market-men save them for you," said Benita. "I saw a child go past here this morning before you were up, with two little fishes six or eight inches long. They were silvery, with bright red stripes along the sides."

"Oh, those were squirrel-fish. We saw some in market the other day, a whole 'heap' of them; but I meant the rainbow-fish, and the parrot-fish, and the glass-eyed snappers, and all the others that we have read about as belonging to tropical waters."

## V.

### THE PASSERS-BY.—THE CHURCHES.—GARDENING.

HOW do you think this would sound in print ?” asked Beatrix, holding up a sheet of paper instead of the usual note-book.

“ Read, and you will know,” replied Barbara, “ or rather *we* shall know.”

#### THE PASSERS-BY.

One of the chief amusements of the day is watching from behind the jalousies the crowds of people who go to the market, or home again. At this date the writer is engaged in studying the loads carried to and fro by the men, women, boys and girls. One never tires of looking. Here is a cart, with long sticks of sugar-cane,—queer, pointed poles that one covets for bean-poles or dahlia-sticks till she finds that they are pithy inside the shiny coat, and will not stand hard usage. An ebony giant has just gone past with a Saratoga trunk upon his head. Somebody must be changing his or her boarding-place. I saw a woman slipshodding down the hill a little while ago, with a half bar of blue soap upon her head. Her hands were entirely empty, and she carried her hat between her teeth, as many of the women do. Such curious and ponderous things as are borne upon the heads of these negroes ! One would hardly believe it possible



that a human skull could stand the pressure, even though its owner be of sable hue. It is no uncommon sight to see a boy helping another with his load, or a woman placing the burden upon the head of her fellow-traveler. "Put me up" is the common phrase, which means that the owner of the basket has been obliged to take it down for some reason, and cannot put it back without assistance. I watched some children in front of our house this morning, and was amused to find that the Nassau boy is still a *boy*. I didn't suppose he was, until I saw the by-play. One little fellow had been to a shop and had gathered a huge bundle of staves, three times as large as himself; but one of the component parts of the parcel slipping out from the encircling hoop, the others followed suit, and the little burden-bearer was in trouble. Patiently he sat down and gathered the sticks, placing them one by one in the barrel-hoop. Their flat sides made them fit rather awkwardly in the round receptacle, and they *would* keep slipping out, when the last two were packed in. He worked for fifteen minutes to make those two staves keep their places, talking busily and good-naturedly to himself all the time, though I could not hear what he said. At last the feat was accomplished, and he stooped to the ground, and tried to raise the bundle to his head; but just as he had poised it there, one of the unruly sticks slipped again, and the rest came tumbling after. Do you think he wailed as one of our small boys would have done? Not a bit of it. He manfully sat down in the midst of the *débris*, and began picking up the sticks, whistling an accompaniment to himself

and his occupation. It took ten minutes this time, and again he raised the burden—to have the same disaster repeated. As the whole came to the ground, a couple of his sable companions appeared on the scene,—Ellen Curry and a boy about the size of our hero. These people are always kind to each other, and the new recruits put their shoulder-blades to the wheel, metaphorically speaking, and soon had the hoop repacked. Then the small boy stood with his back to them, and, with much laughing and tugging, they lifted the load to its owner's head. The three trudged off together, and I, looking after them, saw the girl, who had been the most energetic in the recent packing, slyly step up behind her playfellow, and pull out a stave. Of course, the scene was repeated, the victim enjoying the sport most of all, judging from appearances.

“That’s as far as I have written, and now I want your honest opinion as to its demerits,” concluded Bee.

“Sounds very well, if it’s true,” remarked Barbara, “and I suppose it must be, since its author was an eye-witness.”

“Oh, that will do, of course,” absently assented Benita, who was trying to paint an unknown flower, the petals of which seemed gradually closing, in spite of her ingenious contrivance of pins to keep them open.

“Interesting and true both,” said the Mother. “But you haven’t told anything about the first Sunday, any of you. I thought there were several things worth remembering that day.”

"I have a full and complete account of our Cathedral experience, written on the spot, or rather after our return, for my own 'divorcement.' I'll find it, and present it for your delectation." And Bee rummaged in the tray of her trunk, which stood near the bedroom door.

"Why *will* you always go in the dark?" asked the Mother. "It isn't much trouble to light a lamp."

"Or candle. You've forgotten that we are in the tropics, and use candles constructed with special reference to a warm climate. Oh, here it is." And she opened a thin white box, filled with a miscellaneous assortment of papers, and began reading from a torn sheet:

"Everybody seemed to be dressed in his or her very best, and intent upon reaching a place of worship as soon as possible. Barbara wanted to go to one of our own persuasion, but I was anxious to see something new and strange; besides, we were late, as we always are, to our great disgust, but never to our reformation, and we heard that the Cathedral was near. We emerged from the hotel street, and followed the crowd, black and white, big and little, and every mother's son of them with the tightest of shoes or boots pinching his feet.

"'Is this the way to the Cathedral?' we asked of a respectful and highly respectable colored man.

"'Right dis way, missus. I show you.' And he beckoned benevolently with his long, black forefinger, and grinned upon us as if we had just given him a copper. We followed in his wake till he reached a corner, when he paused and waited for us to come up.

“ ‘ Now you jes turn dis corner, missus, and go up dem steps and you be dar direckly. Go in de middle door, and you strike de sexton.’ ”

“ We told him we thought we could not miss it. The church stood on the corner, but that devoted man never took his eyes off us till we were safe within the portals. He would walk a few steps with his head turned about, and then stop altogether, so fearful was he that we should lose our way from the street to the porch. The sexton was scarcely less solicitous. He met us at the door, and smiled as if we had conferred a personal favor, when to his query about a seat we signified our desire for one. With much flourish he led us up the center aisle, and we were given a pew very near the pulpit. The Cathedral is a brown-stone building, lofty and roomy, with a handsome stained-glass window behind the choir. The services are intoned, the organ is played by a fine-appearing, middle-aged lady, and the choir boys sing well. When we came out, the people seemed to be waiting for something, and we waited with the rest. Presently a squad of gaily dressed soldiers came down from the gallery and took their places in front of the church. There were at least forty of them, I should think.

“ ‘ Forward, march ! ’ shouted the commander, and they took their way toward their quarters. It was a fine sight, and one to which we shall be witnesses again, for I believe the performance is repeated every Sunday.”

“ You never told us about the accommodating colored man before,” said the artist ; “ but the people

are always particularly kind to strangers here ; I mean the colored people. That was rather different from our experience in Trinity Church last Sunday."

"Which is Trinity?" asked Bee. "Oh, I remember, the Methodist, isn't it?"

"Yes, that is, the Wesleyan. There is quite a service, so that at first I imagined that we had made a mistake and were in an Episcopalian church. I was not undeceived until I opened the hymn-book. One thing I liked, everybody sang."

"Just so in the Cathedral—black and white, grown people and children."

"We must write more about the religious privileges," said Barbara, "since they are so abundant. I asked Mr. C. the other day what were the amusements of the Nassauese, as he calls them, and he replied in three words—'Going to church.'"

"Oh, can't you tell about St. Agnes?" exclaimed Bee, "we haven't said a word about it to these two people, and it will be good practice for you."

"I must finish my letter. I'll leave that for you," and Barbara's pen traveled over the paper as if it would never be done.

"It was last Sunday morning, you know, and the long road to Grant's Town was a trifle too warm to be pleasant, but we were well repaid. The church is a pretty stone building, in the pointed style, set back from the street, and embowered in roses and hibiscus shrubs. A tree leans over the roof, and they say it will have gorgeous scarlet blossoms before we go home. What a picturesque sketch it will make,

the church and its surroundings, if you can only paint it ! ”

“ I can and I will,” declared Benita.

“ What was I saying ? Oh, we wondered why there were two bells put up on standards outside, but there was nobody to tell us, nobody to seat us either, when we went in at the centre door of the three, so we took our seats just behind the baptismal font in the middle of the room. I thought the stone coping around the bottom of it would make a place for my feet, and I *am* so short. We had time to look around us before the services began, for we were quite early, in spite of the long walk. The floor and ceiling are of that beautiful pine, and the altar—there were five bouquets of roses on it, and the hangings were of indigo blue and maroon, embroidered with ecclesiastical designs. Lighted candles burned in gold candlesticks—think of that,” she said, turning to the Mother.

“ Why, it’s Catholic, isn’t it ? ”

“ No, indeed, and the candles were red and white and green. They weren’t all lighted, though ; only those at the back. Oh, I forgot to tell you that over the door on the outside was the inscription : ‘ Enter, mortal, praise and pray.’ We must drive past there to-morrow, and you can see the outside, but you must go some Sunday, too. The walls are hung with French lithographs, I think ; at least they are colored—scenes in our Saviour’s life. The people began to assemble, all of them negroes, most of them well dressed ; I should think the church would seat about four hundred and fifty, shouldn’t you, Barb ? ”

"Thereabouts," replied Barbara, without looking up.

"After a while the choir boys marched in—little fellows, some of them—with very black faces and very white gowns; then the venerable priest, and he wore over his long white gown a purple dolman."

"You don't mean dolman, my child."

"Well, it looked exactly like that one you had had ten years ago, only it was more pointed, front and back alike, and extremely short over the arms. I wish you had seen it, then you'd believe what I say, for really it was trimmed all around and down the back seam with white braid. It is only that we are not accustomed to such dress, that it seems strange to us. Do you suppose Aaron would have looked less peculiar than this good old man to our unused eyes? It is we who are strange, isn't it? St. Agnes is very high church, we are told, and good Father Fisher has been there twenty-eight years, without rest or change. This paper, given us on the street, says so. He must be a good worker, and I notice that the colored people pay him great reverence when they meet him. I think it was a special occasion last Sunday, for I can't believe they have as much ceremony at every service. The people bowed their heads at every mention of the name of Christ—the offering was lifted up to the crucifix, and, when the communion was prepared, the priest lifted the wafers and wine in the same way. The communicants went up into the chancel—if that is the name they give the place—and the priest made the sign of the cross with plate and cup before he handed them to the people

kneeling there. I wonder if they did not have tickets. They gave the priest a paper or something as they went up. After the wine had been passed, the priest drank all that was left, and rinsed out the cup twice. I suppose that must have meant *something*, but I can't think what."

"Read your Bible, my child, I think you'll discover the meaning there," said the Mother reprovingly.

"We don't do so in our church," rejoined Benita.

"Who shall say which way is right?" said the Mother.

"He carefully dried the cup with a napkin, after that," went on Bee, "and then we had a good short sermon, but I couldn't help wondering if those people understood it, they are so ignorant. I enjoyed their singing very much, didn't you, Barbara?"

"Yes, I wonder how they teach them? but I suppose it comes naturally. It seems to me, friends, that we ought not to sit up any longer. I am sleepy, and we have something to do on the morrow."

"Oh, yes! the carpenter is coming early to ease these front windows. I shouldn't be surprised if he were here by ten o'clock. That is the time he came this morning, but actually he was all day making the small cupboard. He seems to work all the time too, but he goes to his shop for every tool that he uses, instead of bringing them in a basket as our carpenters do; and isn't it queer that these men seem to have no standard of prices as we do. I asked him how much he would charge for putting up a shelf in the dining-room, and he said a dollar and a quarter!"

"How long will it take you?" I asked.



" 'Half an hour, Missus,' he said.

"Think of it! I inquired his price for a day's work.

" 'We doesn't work that way, Missus. We always works by the job.'

"He is a splendid looking fellow, isn't he? And have you noticed how much better he speaks than many of the colored people? I wanted to get some idea of business, so I insisted upon the last question. 'How much would you ask if you worked all day for me? You would do that if I wanted you to, wouldn't you?'

" 'Yes, Missus.'

" 'Well, how much would you ask by the day?'

"He thought a minute, and said seventy-five cents!"

"That is as much as they know about business," said Benita, "but I'm glad you paid him the dollar and a quarter for the shelf. His shop is two streets from here, you know, and he had to go a good many times."

"Well, good-night," said the Mother, folding her work, "if there's so much to do to-morrow, all in the way of play, I suppose, we mustn't linger."

"Are you going to have radishes for breakfast?" asked Benita.

"Oh, Mary, Mary, quite contrary,  
How does your garden grow?"

sang Beatrix.

"It grows very fast, I think," responded the Mother. "The radishes are almost large enough, and the lettuce would have been, if that stupid boy had made the beds right."

"You must have your experience in the book," said Barbara. "We were in Grant's Town, you know, the day you had your two garden-beds constructed, and I never heard how it was done. Tell us about it. Why weren't the beds right?"

"Well, you see, I had gone out with my trowel to plant the radish and lettuce seed, when a boy about as big as Lemuel came through the lane with the sugar you had sent home from the store."

"And you asked him to make your garden?"

"No; I only said, 'Is this the way you make gardens here?' and he said it wasn't. He said he would make it for me, if I'd wait for him to run home for his peck-hoe."

"His what?" inquired the artist, looking up from her sketch-book.

"His peck-hoe."

"Don't you mean pick?"

"No,—peck, peck-hoe. That's just what he called it."

"And you waited, of course. Such a chance wasn't to be lost," said Beatrix.

"Yes, I waited, but he wasn't gone a minute. He came back with a short-handled thing that had a long blade—"

"Why, what was it?" said Barbara.

"A peck-hoe was what he called it, but I should say it was a kind of two-handled hoe. He scratched up the ground—"

"Your chicken would have done that, if he had been given half a chance," said Bee.

—"And then he raised up the bed," went on the Mother.

"Got a corner of the peck-hoe under one end, I suppose," remarked Barbara.

"Hush," said Bee. "This is going into our book and I want to hear the rest. And then?"

"And then he brought two pails of water and poured on the beds, and planted the seeds."

"But I thought he did something with his hands," said Benita, who had heard about it before.

"Oh, I forgot that he used his fingers for a rake, and made the earth fine with them. He told me I must water the beds every night and morning, but the lettuce has not grown well. I *thought* that wasn't the way to do it, but I didn't say anything. It seemed as if he ought to know better than I. I paid him three big coppers, and he went off happy."

"I don't believe he ever made a garden in his life before," announced Bee. "That 'peck-hoe' he had probably stolen from somebody's kitchen, and I suppose it wasn't designed for that use at all. These negroes will do anything for a few coppers."

"But the gardens all look like that," said Barbara. "They are made with high beds, so that the water will be sure to run off, and then the poor, devoted creatures wet them thoroughly, night and morning."

## VI.

### THE CORAL REEF.

NASSAU, Feb. 25, 1886.

DEAR FRIENDS :—Upon the morning of the twenty-second, just as we were devising ways and means wherewith to celebrate the birthday of the illustrious G. W., there came a messenger from Captain Major to say that it was a perfect day for the Coral Reef ; that is, a south wind and a smooth sea. We had been waiting some weeks for a propitious time, so we immediately put up a modest luncheon, bolted, locked, and barred our domicile, and rushed off to the dock, where the gay little Molly Bawn awaited our arrival. This jaunty craft is painted brown upon the outside ; her deck is lemon-yellow ; the inner portions are pale blue and white. When I tell you that fifteen are easily carried by her, you can fancy how comfortable four people might be. Molly has a main boom thirty-seven feet long, and that gives an ample spread of canvas ; but as Robbins, who manages our row-boat, says, "No motter w'at kin' o' boat you is got, you wan's good conduction," and that we are sure to have from Captain Major.

We were sorry to sail out under the Union Jack when the *Nirvana*, of New York, was dressed from top to toe with other flags, and the American banner

floated from so many standards,—but away we went, through the spongers lying at anchor, and soon passed the “steam drudge,” where a lonesome cat and dog greeted us as resentfully as if we had really injured them. Then on we fared past Big and Little Potter’s Cay, Fort Montague, and Athol Island, which latter is the “curantine” station of Nassau.

It was “hoody” when we left the dock—oh, maybe you don’t know that I mean cloudy—and as for the sea, beautiful as it always is to us who know its changeful aspects so well, it seemed as if it had never shown a lovelier face. We passed over the snowy ocean floor through waters of lucent green, then came to depths of robin’s-egg blue, where the short brown weeds gave seeming substance to the shimmering waves. The northern sky showed a great bank of indigo blue—that blue where red is strongly hinted. There were endless variations of color everywhere, and I, who had sadly concluded that poets and writers imagined vain things, or else that I was color-blind, at last I saw “empurpled waters,” for, as we gently sped along I beheld for myself the hues of the amethyst, like a delicate film upon the surface, deepening only to fade and vanish away like a vapor.

Presently

“Down dropped the breeze, the sails dropped down,”  
but it was not

“Sad as sad could be,”

even though a pair of oars began to ply. We looked down through fifteen feet of water, and plainly saw many strange and curious animals. Upon the white

sand lay the great brown sea-stars, and as the waves were very gentle, and the surface of each had its own fine little crinkles, all these star-fish seemed to be dancing about on the bottom in fours or sixes.

About this time we became aware that our captain was whistling very industriously in a succession of clear coaxing notes, such as I'm sure I've somewhere heard used in calling a horse from pasture ; then he went into the Sidie which had been trailing behind us, and rowed ahead, while Lemuel took his place and even whistled the same notes.

"Keep it up, Lem," called the captain in a moment of silence, and then it dawned upon us that they were trying to "raise the wind." We couldn't induce Lemuel to vary his whistle, nor could we laugh him out of his firmly seated conviction that his whistling would bring about the desired result. After an hour of steady entreaty the breeze freshened, filling our drooping sails, and sending the Mollie ahead like a swift-winged bird.

Do you fancy that the calm was tedious ? Not at all. We never wearied of the play of the upper waters, or of gazing deeper where an irregular net of filmy meshes lay upon the sand, each crossing of the dancing films fastened by dancing bits of rainbows. Never again shall I see the bow in the sky without feeling sure that I have beheld some of the countless tricksy sprites that join their hands to make it—that I have looked straight into their homes, and seen them in their hours of mirth.

Noon came, and we discussed the modest lunch that we had providently brought, and still we sailed

onward, passing Salt Cay with its 10,000 cocoanuts upon our left. Upon the other side were the Honeycomb Cays, bare, jagged, black rocks of varying sizes, which in course of time will gather to their dusky bosoms something to sustain vegetable life in its lower forms.

At last we anchored near the Reef, and rowed off in the Sidie to see its wonders. How can I tell you of the home of the coral? From the white ocean-floor rose arch and column, dome and tower. We looked into grottoes and caves without number. We saw many kinds of coral growing together, though not in the snowy purity of the cabinet specimens as you may have fancied. Sea-ginger, lace coral, finger coral, stone coral—each was beautiful in its own distinctive color, either bright yellow, pale sepia, olive gray or other soft tint—endless color no less than endless enchantment of form. Very many sponges grew there, conspicuously the curious bouquet sponge and the coral sponge. In the niches of the reef huge sea urchins as black as coals ensconced themselves, and with slender spines six inches long they looked particularly formidable, though very picturesque at a safe distance. Purple sea-feathers drooped from the countless projections, yellow fans waved languidly; in and out darted the most brilliant fishes, the parrot, the rainbow, various porgies and angel-fish sporting every conceivable combination of color. There were brain corals as large as a bushel-basket, and there were others that were delicate in the extreme. Would I take a diver upon such an excursion and set him to hammering off

specimens that awakened our covetousness? I would as soon think of despoiling the Cathedral of Milan to enrich my sordid self.

As we floated over this strangely beautiful underworld, a real pang of pity assailed me that the millions of patient little toilers who had reared such graceful forms never knew, and never could know, whereto their brief lives tended. Those who built the strong and wide foundations did not dream of the symmetry and beauty that was to crown them, and make them so beautiful in the eyes of men, just as in our own world of struggling endeavor, quiet, humble souls often build better than they know, when they are simply living lives of unselfish loving, in very humble and obscure corners. Upon some day not far distant we shall see that other harmonious lives would not have been possible, save for those foundation workers who wrought quietly and faithfully.

Oh, if I could only make you see what we have seen! but it is in vain to struggle with the English language at such odds. Come and look for yourselves. We will lodge you in gardens of spices, and feast you on nectar and ambrosia. Then you shall behold what I have vainly striven to set before your mental vision.



## VII.

STEAMER DAY.—A NASSAU KITCHEN.—MARKETS.—  
CHURCHES.—STROLLS.

THE "book" had become a settled thing, at least in the minds of the four people whom it concerned. Whether it should ever concern anybody else remained to be seen ; but for the present, Bee, to her great delight, heard frequent allusions to it, and the tormenting and scurrilous remarks, as she was wont to call them, had been dropped. Instead, she would be told, "That is a good remark to put in," or "Here is a bit of information for you," or "I saw something to-day that I thought worthy of record for our next meeting." She received all such indications of which way the wind blew as if it were the most natural thing in the world for the family to be engaged in writing a book, and when, one evening, soon after the arrival of the steamer, the Mother had proposed that they read aloud the second instalment of a serial begun in one of the magazines, she drew a deep sigh, and said, "We have stern realities to deal with this evening. We must not waste our time in idle pleasures."

Barbara echoed the sigh, and remarked regretfully, "I did want to know how poor Jeanie Carlyle came

on with her 'bogues,' but I suppose we have no business with her to-night."

It was also a sign of the change in the family mercury when Benita rejoined, "Think how her husband spent his time, and be ashamed of yourselves."

"And how he treated his wife! Poor Jeanie! But we are not Carlyles, and consequently can never have his temptations. It's a dreadful thing to be great."

All this from Barbara, who was unfolding her third letter.

"We shouldn't be so selfish if we were, I hope," said Bee; "but if you think there's any danger, we won't go on with the book."

"We'll take the risk, I think," said Barbara, laughing, and beginning to read.

"Oh, wait a minute!" interrupted Bee. "I keep forgetting to ask you if you sent the request we talked of in that first letter—to have it sent back, you know."

"Never thought of it till it had gone, and the second too."

"We shall never see those two again, I feel sure," said Bee dejectedly.

NASSAU, March 3, 1886.

MY BELOVED PEOPLE:—Steamers are supposed to arrive at this port upon alternate Mondays, and we begin early to watch the signals upon the forts, or rather, we set Lemuel at that task. It is some time after one is sighted before we can know whether she is from Cuba or New York. We always wish the latter to come first, so that we may answer any important letters. Upon the third arrival we were awakened by

the gun which signified that the steamer had anchored, but usually there is a period of more or less uncertainty, and the town actually seems to have a little life. People walk to and from the Post Office as if existence were not entirely a burden. Even women sometimes venture to post or receive their precious letters, while for a few hours the devoted postmaster needs the hands of Briareus, the patience of Job, the wisdom of Solomon, and the meekness of Moses, as he and his assistants attack the great bags of mail, and answer all sorts of unreasonable and ridiculous questions.

We take our basketful, and come home. Everything stops while we read and read, and for days we talk over your shortest sentences, and even your hints of things.

We are going on in much the same vagabondish fashion as when I last wrote. Our boy Lemuel is an endless amusement to us, a solemn, sedate youth, who is given to stammering in moments of embarrassment. I have learned that when he throws back his head, distends his eyes, turns red in the face—or would, if his complexion were suitable for the act—he is struggling for an *m*, and I can usually cut his agony short by pronouncing the word. He is very useful to us in marketing matters, but if he fails us, we can always find somebody to trot along after us with our basket, for the magnificent sum of one cent. We've had oranges twice a day, but now they're growing scarce, and we console ourselves with sapodillas, those "russet globes of sugared honey." Pineapples we have for six cents, brought from some of the

out-islands where the season is earlier. They are delicious: and soursop — calumnious name! — is only another word for nectar or ambrosia. Mangoes will be “full” soon, and Lemuel assures us that after we once taste them we shall want nothing else.

To signalize the advent of the March lion, Bee and I went over to Hog Island in a row-boat. We can't resist the temptation to learn all we possibly can about this lovely isle, and we are glad to be told that “some fish is most gen'lly, usu'lly poison at certain partic'lar times.” Moreover, Saunders said it was when they got away from school and ate copper off the ships' bottoms; but how we are to detect a truant fish, I don't understand. He pointed out the watch-tower of Black Beard, a pirate who flourished “w'en our granfaders was boys,” and told us where we could find the graves of those who were hung here for piracy.

“Are there any sharks about?” I asked.

“Oh, yes, Missus! but they mos'ly come 'round in night into harbor.”

Then he told us how an American lady went out sharking, and the shark towed the boat along for miles, “but she not 'fraid; she like it.”

“Was there very much danger?” said Beatrix.

“No, missus; you jest sit still and mind *you* business; de shark he down in water mindin' *his* own business. He cahn't upset de boat nohow. Wy, you jes has a rope tied round' a bar'l, you trow bar'l overboard, an' he spose it de boat.” (We shall not go sharking, even after this exposition of its safety.)

He also said, "Set a tub o' water out un de jew in wintah ; bathe in it in mawnin', an' it cure de rheumatics." His partner told us where to find "banana g'oves 'n' cocoanut g'oves, and othah vegetable curiosities."

We enjoyed the row exceedingly, for the sea was "smooth as castor-oil," according to Saunders. He had a water-glass—a wooden box with a pane of glass in the bottom ; through this, held on the water by its long handles, and thus obliterating the ripples of the surface, we saw the marvels of the submarine world plainly. Around the dock were sea-urchins, with long, inky-black spines, but farther out was a species new to us. A cargo of lime was once wrecked in the harbor, and among the barrels were corals, sponges, sea-fans and sea-feathers. Perhaps the little, bright-colored fish were the most lovely objects ; they are as beautiful as the birds.

As to churches, we went to the Cathedral first, as you will have heard, and to St. Andrews, which is called the Scotch Kirk. This building has doors at the sides as well as in the front, and we can not grow used to seeing them, and the windows, wide open. The pastor read an excellent sermon, and the choir, with the help of a fine organ, gave us good music. Everybody sings, and wasn't it pleasant, think you, that we could join in the verse,

" Though in a foreign land,  
We are not far from home."

And it was good to hear our own country and its rulers mentioned after the usual prayer for the Queen

and her kingdom. One thing was a little odd to us, namely, the banns of marriage published between George Weech, bachelor, and Susan Maria Dean, widow.

Besides going to St. Agnes, in Grant's Town, we have been to St. Mary's, which is in the western end of the city. St. Mary's two front doors are in the side, and doors opposite open into the cemetery. Here were pictures, roses, and the usual furnishings of an English church. The worshippers were nearly all black people, who sang their way through the services with full voice, if not understanding. It never occurred to me before that there should be considerable proficiency in reading, if one would be a singer, and sing to the edification of a hearer. A youth who sported a stovepipe hat and flourished a small cane, sat very near us, and sang either base, alto, or soprano, just as suited his roving fancy, but we didn't smile, even when he sang of the oil that "ran down on Aaron's bread." It was the day for the *Benedicite omnia opera*, with its thirty-two verses, and some of them are so full that one must be an adept in song to slip them all into the melody. I pitied the young singer, who evidently looked ahead for easy verses, plunged into them with reckless zeal, only to be out of his depth and floundering hopelessly long before the end was neared. Again and again he started, with "stops all open," but when he came to "Ananias, Azarias, and Misael," he surrendered, and kept mute through the remainder. How I would like to hear these people sing our Gospel Hymns! I believe they would get some of the spirit of them into

their lives, and moreover they could certainly understand the words, if nothing more.

The churches have two Sunday-schools, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and both seem well attended. There was a picnic for a Sunday-school yesterday. It was on a lawn, and at 5:30 there were ice-cream, cake, and tableaux in the chapel. Isn't that mild? But every pleasure here is mild. I count twenty-one between the strokes of the Cathedral clock!

Bee has caught some of Benita's enthusiasm, and dashes off a pastel every day or two. Each effort is instantly tacked up, and our rooms begin to look like an amateur art-gallery. We walk miles and miles, and never without bringing home something new and strange. A Spanish woman gave us a Malmaison rose the other day that was fully as large as a hollyhock. In all this time our street shows no life; not even a slipper or a smoking-cap have I observed behind the jealousies. We can tell Americans as far as we can see them, and we delight in their expressive faces, in their walk, and in their conversation, though most of our acquaintances have flitted elsewhere. It seems odd enough to meet an ebony miss in a light-blue silk dress covered with deep lace flounces, a little "nose-tip" veil, and a white silk parasol, but such is the taste of those who can afford the outlay.

All yesterday afternoon Beatrix and I spent in Beersheba. Try to imagine the luxury of a kitchen like ours, thirty feet long, ten feet wide, and very high, with no heat, moreover, and no odors, but those that come in at the large windows—when

once we have overcome the reluctance of the banana leaves to the presence of the open shutters among them ; then roses and oranges make one think of Araby the Blest. At night the air is heavy with the perfume of the *citrus* family, every member of which is now flower-laden. It had come to pass that we were unwise enough to buy twelve cents' worth of tamarinds, and before dinner we slipped off the sober brown pods with a view to a little amateur preserving. It is quite the thing here for ladies to attend to this item of domestic economy, and we yearned to try our skill. Of all expansive objects, those tamarinds seem the most wonderful. One expects rice, and dry beans, and dried apples to swell greatly in cooking ; but we were totally unprepared to see those white, juicy things rising higher and higher in the pan. They are very sour. I cast in our last grain of sugar, and sent Lemuel for more. Three full pounds were added, and then still more, while I stirred, and tasted, and wondered when the bubbling mass would be done. At the same time Beatrix was baking a spice-cake for Benita in our kettle ; for no farthest stretch of the imagination can call that kerosene stove of ours a success. It does not give off vile smells, and that is its only positive virtue. It will not bake, it will not boil, except you allow it an unconscionable length of time ; it consumes quantities of oil ; it makes everything that goes near it smoky and miserable. The cake baked very well on the bottom and sides, but obstinately refused to cook its interior till coals were heaped on the lid, after the fashion of our grandmother's time ; then it rose up in a business-like way,



bumped its head on the cover, and was done,—triumphantly done.

A slight drawback that we have here is the lack of rainy days wherein we may gather up some of our dropped stitches ; but the cake and the tamarinds helped us out a little. Our shoe-buttons are now all firmly anchored, and divers rents repaired. Presently, that is, about four o'clock, we pronounced our conserve finished, and then what a search for vessels to hold our luscious sweetness ! It took two one-quart glass jars, all our tumblers save one, and all our milk and jelly tins. But it is rich, and red, and beautiful to see. When you drop in to tea after our return to—*weather*—you too may not consider our afternoon entirely wasted !

Where do you suppose we are on this fifth day of March ? Off on a picnic, to be sure. We were just as confident beforehand that the weather would be propitious, as we are skeptical at home. For weeks past the thermometer has registered 68° or 70° all the time except at noon, when the sun lies in the well-garden, and raises the temperature in just that place. Lemuel came early and took Benita on, with Trix as vanguard, while the Mother and I packed the important basket and bundled together the camp-chairs and cushions, for which Lemuel returned later. And where are we ? I hear some one ask. You would never guess. On the drawbridge of an old, old fort ! It is an immense affair, built by the Spaniards nobody knows when. It has a deep, dry moat, over which we came by a wooden bridge, and here we sit in the capacious niche, backed by doors with mighty iron

bars, shaded from the sun, and screened from the wind. I have been down twenty stone steps into the wide moat, and I have walked around the sides of the great wall. For some distance up they are of the rock in which the moat has been dug. In every tiny crevice some living thing has obtained a foothold, and ferns, grasses, shrubs, and even small trees are carrying on a hard sort of existence,—existence under difficulties. Even in the grooves where the ends of this drawbridge would run, if it were raised, are plummy ferns. I saw a small tree growing from a little chink ; in every direction it had sent roots, about like a pipe-stem in size and covered with bark. As soon as a root found a place where it could penetrate, in it went. I followed one of these roots along the gray wall for ten feet. Thus growing, such a tree reminds one forcibly of a spider with extra long legs.

The care-taker of the fort received us at the drawbridge, and answered our many questions with alacrity. Doubtless we are a welcome break in his monotonous days, for he is always on duty, and his sole employment is scanning the horizon for sails, and displaying the signals that shall indicate their direction and character. His salary is £2 10s. per month—\$12—and life might not be unendurable if he had employment. He might be a cobbler, but as Beatrix says, "Who would climb the hill to be cobbled?" We could not enter Fort Charlotte without a pass, so we sent Lemuel down, and received the coveted paper. We did not descend into the vast subterranean chambers that are said to exist, nor explore powder-magazines, but walked about in the

two bastions, looked over the walls, and remembered the day when such fortifications were needed, when knight, and squire, and page lived to achieve chivalric fame. A few rusty cannon and some rusty balls were all that appeared in the way of defense, and we wondered whether the adjutant and captain, who made their regular visit of inspection while we were on the point of lookout, were sure that the harbor would be safe if an enemy's frigate should open fire upon Nassau. Anything but warlike is this peaceful fort, where slender legged, woolless sheep wander over the walls, and are stabled in the deserted barracks lower down the hill.

I was politely requested to read East Angels aloud, while the Mother knitted and the others were sketching. You know my obedient nature, but I can't stand abstraction in more than *one* of my listeners. I read awhile, but I don't believe they know a word I read concerning Margaret—poor; proud, suffering Margaret—or whimsical Garda, to say nothing of Carlos; for one artist was absorbed in depicting Hog Island and the harbor, while the other struggled with Silver Cay and the intervening water. Oh, what water! It is the despair of writers no less than of artists. Some say it is the *aqua marina* of beryl; others compare it to malachite; and others speak of the sapphire and turquoise. It isn't of uniform hue; it lies in bands of distinct color, so that in rowing across the stripes, it is like stepping from pavement to turf,—I mean that the change is as marked; and that change comes from the different depths of the water over the white ocean bed. The deeper the

water, the darker it is. And then, sun and wind modify the tints constantly. Let Benita set her palette, and begin to work—just so certainly some transformation takes place, and she rummages for fresh colors, only to find that, while she searches, another phase has appeared. Beatrix moans and sighs over her crayons. Thus you will readily see why I couldn't read to them. I'm glad of the leisure for my letter to you, for I want you to know and enjoy just as much as lies in the power of my pen to set before you. The Mother tired of her knitting, and after lunch went off into the moat, where she is leisurely examining its walls and some of the strange plants. She has just called up that she thinks that Mrs. B. would like to know what picnic fare is in the tropics, so I will tell you that we had bread and butter, dried beef, deviled chicken,—the mother wouldn't taste the chicken, and I'm sure it was because she thought its name savored of wickedness,—sea-foams from New York, ginger-snaps, also from New York, sponge and drop cakes, Benita's spice-cake, tamarind jelly, oranges, bananas, sapodillas, cold tea, and a bottle of innocent ginger-pop.

March 9.

Lemuel was on hand at four o'clock of our Fort Charlotte day to bear away our *impedimenta*, and when he returned we began the descent. Our winding way lay through clumps of acacias such as we have in our green-house, with the difference that here they are large shrubs; the foliage is like a cassia, or sensitive plant, and the flowers are little balls of yellow

fuzz, which are delicately fragrant. Great lantanas grew by our path, and logwood ; that, too, is very fragrant. We found a tall eupatorium, and huge morning-glories that had outlasted the fervor of the sun. Lemuel gathered various queer things for us, among them some dreadfully thorny seed-boxes, where kind Mother Nature provides marbles for the youthful Nassauese,—sea-beans we call them, while “nicker” is the negroes’ name. We found again the “mosquito-bush,” which Lemuel affirms is “hard-head,” and now, just as Beatrix foresaw, it has bunches of tiny brownish flowers in the edge of its shining leaves. “It’s good for sickness, mum,” the boy said. So are most herbs here, if we may believe our informants. The wild sage, as they call lantana, is “good for pain,” but I only hope no idle physician of either school will ever be turned loose here, to add all these new simples to our over-abundant materia medica.

We picked up a wild mamee blossom that somebody had dropped. It looked so enticing, lying there in the path, that Trix pinned it on her dress, and looked as if adorned for a party. It is a lovely, camellia-like flower, with as much substance as if made of wax, and exquisitely delicate in coloring. These trees grow in our own street, and the pink and white beauties keep for many days ; the leaves will stay fresh a long time without water.

As we walked along, Lemuel said, “You can go from here to the Guv’ner’s, an’ Fort Fincastle too, mum.”

“Is this the road ?” I said, pointing to a side-path.

“Oh, no, mum ; but you c-can go, mum.”

"Where's the road, Lemuel?"

"W'y, ain't no r-r-road, mum; it's in the ground, mum." And his voice dropped to an awestruck whisper.

Then up spoke his mistress, saying, "Lemuel, did you ever *see* that road, or go through on it yourself?"

"Oh, no, mum."

"Do you know anybody who has ever seen, it or been through it?"

"N-no mum; but it's th-th-*there*, mum."

"I can't believe there's a road there if nobody has ever seen it, Lemuel."

"All right, mum. It's there," said Lemuel, firmly but respectfully.

Nothing will shake the superstitions of these negroes. You can't induce one to cut a banana so as to touch the figure of the cross which they hold to be there, though to us the form is by no means distinct.

We went down to market this morning directly after breakfast, and bought some turbot, eight cents' worth,—an excellent fish for boiling; some tomatoes, which we like better than our northern ones; some small green squashes; a handful of ripe tamarinds "for bev'rage"; oranges, sapodillas, a sugar-apple, a Jamaica apple, and three conchs,—yes, and some onions. Bee and I spent this afternoon in Beersheba, for I omitted to say that we bought some guavas, also, this morning, having ambitions in regard to marmalade and jelly. Guavas always remind me of mandrakes as to size and color; they are salmon-colored inside, and as full of seeds as figs. We made some candy of the cane molasses, which is so very good here, stirring in shreds of fresh, sweet cocoanut. As to the

conch, it is the rightful inhabitant of just such great pink-lipped shells as are sometimes cried about the streets in New York, along with pineapples. It is as large as several clams, and its outside is so tough that you must beat it thoroughly with a hammer before you boil it for soup, or fry it, or stew it. It has a sweetish taste, but is very good, we think. This same conch occasionally produces lovely pink pearls of no small value.

A new chapter has opened up in our quiet life. We wanted poultry for our table, but the only specimens we have ever seen in the meat-market, were mere bundles of bones, covered by thin blue skin. We are offered plenty of live chickens, which they beg us to "heft"; they never weigh them; and so in a moment of weakness we bought a living skeleton, which Lemuel brought into our yard, and tethered safely to a banana. His name is Thucydides so far as spelling goes, but he is pronounced in two syllables (in honor of Fred P.) like this,—*Thuke*-dides. This noble Grecian is wilder than any falcon; he won't eat common-sized corn at all, and has to be fed on what they call pigeon corn,—little stuff, smaller than sweet peas. He spends his time sawing away at the banana, or winding himself up on that, or on a guava bush. The Mother feeds him with great devotion, for the times and seasons of Lemuel's appearance are uncertain.

Do write more letters, dear friends. Remember our solemn agreement, and that I have a strong sense of justice in my mental make-up. And so, farewell,

## VIII.

### SHOPPING IN NASSAU.

“IT seems to me,” said Bee after a pause, “that somebody ought to write about the shopping privileges. Hardly a word has been said on the subject.”

“You are the very one to do it, then,” asserted Barbara. “You know you always say you have a genius for buying things.”

“That’s what I say myself, sir,” quoted Bee, “and to that end I have prepared an article—an article,” she went on, pretending not to see the big eyes Barbara was making from her side of the table, “which I will now submit to your kind consideration.”

She unrolled a half-yard of narrow paper, apparently blank pages from an old ledger pasted together, and began with much gusto to read the following :

It is great fun to shop in Nassau. If you want anything, you generally know where it—isn’t. It is true that you don’t often want anything—but the other day we did want a black braid. We went into the first store we came to, and inquired.

“For a dress-skirt?” the clerk asked ; and when we replied meekly that we had intended to use it for



that purpose, he asked again what color we wished. To our answer he responded,

"I don't believe you'll find such a thing as a black braid in Nassau, madam."

"What do people do when they want such an article?" we inquired.

He looked pityingly at us, and said he guessed they either sent to America, or went without.

We did the latter, and comforted ourselves with the thought that if we were at home we should probably freeze our noses going to the nearest store for the article.

Nobody, except ourselves, ever seems to buy anything, and we can't help thinking that we are looked upon as a godsend in that particular. The dry-goods stores are mostly very small, and microscopic in regard to their stock of goods, and everything is kept closely wrapped in paper, on account of the climate, no doubt. It looks funny to see a white-headed old gentleman mount a tall step-ladder, bring down a square paper package and deposit it carefully on the counter; this we saw the other day up the street. We watched with interest while the shopman untied the string very carefully, laid the parcel down, deliberately unfolded the two papers, a brown and a white one, and disclosed a quantity of mosquito netting.

"How much is it a yard?" we asked.

"Three shillings," he replied.

We were thunderstruck. We looked at the man and gasped, "Seventy-two cents for a yard of mosquito netting!"

He smiled benignly upon us, and said that he meant three of our shillings. We said we thought thirty-six cents a large price to pay.

"But this is only thirty cents," he replied, having evidently as little knowledge of our money, as he conceived us to have of his.

"We only pay a few cents for ours," we said.

"Oh, the mosquitoes here would walk right through *your* kind," he replied. "We have to get this close lace: the other wouldn't sell at all."

We didn't believe him, but we bought the lace, and waited as patiently as we could while he folded up the piece from which he had cut our few yards, wrapped each paper tenderly around it, tied the string in a neat double bow-knot, and replaced it upon its high shelf. When he had made our piece into a diminutive square, picked up a torn scrap of paper from the floor behind the counter, and squeezed in the package by the help of a string that would only go once and a half around, he turned to us for the money. We gave him three shining two-shilling pieces, looking for one shilling's change in return. He took the three pieces to a desk, coming back in a minute with two of them and two shilling pieces. What did the man mean? we queried. Was he suddenly moved to present us with the cloth? "Here is the money you gave me," he explained, "six shillings. See? I take out five shillings, and I give you back one shilling for your own. This," putting his hand over the five shillings, "pays for the cloth. *This* is your change."

We took it, and walked slowly home. We looked in the glass. Then we said to each other that in the

States, at least before we came away, we believed that we should have been taken for persons of ordinary intelligence!

"Yes; but that is the way they invariably do business here," said Barbara. "They always give you back the full change and take out their pay afterwards. I saw a clerk in the store down here at the corner, talking to a respectable-looking elderly gentleman after this fashion, telling off the coins with his fingers: '*This* pays for the sugar, *this* pays for the butter, *this* pays for the cheese, *this* pays for the dried beef; and here is your change,—one sixpence.' And that saintly man took up the coin, and went his way out of the store without once breaking the third commandment; at least he didn't do it aloud.'"

"He never thought of it," said Bee. "It's the custom of the country."

"Why isn't that the best way?" asked the Mother in a tone of strong conviction. "It saves thinking. And who wants to think in a climate like this?"

"You might have told about the man from the store on Bay street, who came—"

"I did," again spoke up Bee, reading:

I don't think we ought to blame the poor man who tied up the mosquito netting so carefully. String and paper are choice articles in this country. We bought a small sieve one day, and the colored clerk who brought it home remarked in his very best English, "I undo it fo' yo', missus." and we never perceived there was anything but kindness in his action, till he had bowed and scraped his way out

with the paper and string in his hand. I presume he deposited them on his head as soon as the door was closed.

"Think of saving paper and string to do up somebody's else parcel in," said the letter-writer, looking over her last pages.

"But why not?" said the artist.

"Children, you shouldn't interrupt the reading with your remarks," admonished the Mother. "I like to hear about the buying and selling in this queer country. What else have you written?"

"I don't mind the interruptions," said Bee good-naturedly. "It's all in the way of business. There isn't much more." And she proceeded:

We cannot become accustomed to seeing people buy everything in small quantities, though what they would do with more than enough for a day, I don't know. They buy flour by the pound, and wrap it in coarse paper, rolling up the ends to avoid the use of a string. I felt the deepest sympathy for a poor, half-grown girl we met in the street a day or two ago. She had dropped the pound of flour, breaking the paper. Imagine the catastrophe! There are other things than spilt milk that you can't pick up, and flour is one of them.

I ought not to close this paper without a commendatory word for the shop-keepers, went on Bee grandly, not heeding, or at least not caring, that the others smiled over her airs. They are exceedingly kind and obliging. Our landlord spent at least an hour running around to the largest stores for change last week. I had given him a five-pound note in

payment for our rent,—three pounds. He found it at last, but he had to go miles and miles for it—

“Beware of exaggeration, my friend. It is bad style,” said Barbara.

Miles and miles, asseverated Bee; they don't have change in Nassau. Somebody told us this, and it must be true, judging from the difficulty we have in obtaining it. We took it into our heads one day that we wanted some potted chicken, so we inquired of one of the good friends on Bay Street where we could obtain it.

“If you find it at all, you'll find it on Blank Street,” and to Blank Street we went. The polite merchant put his hand on it at once, to our great surprise, and we carried it home in triumph. That was the second week after we came, and we liked it so much that we wanted more. It was three weeks after we bought the first, and we had never been in the store excepting that one time,—yet, will you believe me, the proprietor saw us coming from his barrel-seat outside the door, jumped down and marched to the self-same shelf, took down another can of potted chicken, and was waiting with it when we entered his store! Query—How did he know we were going to his store? how did he know we wanted potted chicken? how did he know us anyway? If I had not been so tired I would have gone all the way back that night, and presented him with a bit of this plant under our window, which the natives call “match-me-if-you-can.” A woman-merchant on another street was equally attentive. We went in and tried to buy samples of the pretty palmetto rope of

which she displayed three varieties in her window. She cut it carefully, tied up the ends to keep them from raveling, and would accept no pay.

"Now," said she, "you are Americans, and are interested in the palmetto. I'm just going to give you one of these hats. They are made on the Out-Islands and cost six cents. I'd like to show you the palmetto trees on some of those islands," looking over a huge pile of hats to find the best one. "There, that's a beauty, so even and firm," and she presented it with a kindly smile. "I'll say to you in confidence," she leaned over the counter and spoke so that nobody else could hear, "I'm praying *hard* to see the Stars and Stripes flying over the hill yonder!" I'm not going to tell that woman's name, but I cherish her memory, and I can't help hoping that her prayer may come true.

"Oh, oh, oh!" exclaimed Barbara, "it'll never do to put that in, and *you* enjoying life under this peaceful government. What could we do with this island if we had it?"

"Raise cocoanuts, of course."

"Better raise corn, since you know how to do that already," replied Benita.

"But cocoanuts are more aristocratic," ventured Beatrix. "Corn is so plebeian."

"But very good to eat, my child," said the mother. "Wouldn't you like some sweet corn like that in our garden for your dinner to-morrow?"

"I would rather have *one* nice, big, jelly cocoanut," answered Bee, "than a hundred ears of the sweetest corn in our garden!"

"But, seriously now, do you think it any harm to bring in that incident? Nobody will ever know who said it, so no one can be accused of disloyalty, and everybody knows that a little American enterprise would be a good thing."

"Put it in if you like. It will never see a stronger light than that of our evening lamp," said Benita.

"Why didn't you tell some of the queer things we have seen in the other stores?" asked Barbara. "How packed they are with everything to sell, so that sometimes we can hardly crowd through to make our purchases, and how they let down the stairs over the tops of the goods, when they want to mount to the second story, drawing them up with a rope afterwards—"

"Yes, and how the tea—three coppers' worth—is put up in tiny cornucopias, and piled in the windows," added Bee, "and pepper sold by the pint measure. Oh, there are ever so many things that I shall think of when I have more time—but do you suppose it will *do*, so far?" with a deprecatory glance at the critical Barbara.

"Very well, indeed, my friend—as well as could be expected, perhaps."

"We are going to have a treat from Benita," remarked Beatrix, "I happen to know the subject of her discourse—"

"Or paper," said Benita, unfolding it.

## IX.

### LEMUEL.—THE SKETCHING TOUR.—GOVERNMENT HILL.

A SKETCHING party, consisting of the pastel and water-color amateurs, with the all-important factotum, took its way one morning, not long since, to the Archway at the top of the hill. Early in this pleasant life, the invalid, who had been persuaded to bring her Bath chair all these miles, and had used it more than in a dozen years before, was fortunate enough to fall in with "Bankey," an interesting lad, not unknown to fame. He it was who introduced her to the first sights of this strange place, and his bright face and intelligent answers made him sadly regretted when, on the first Sunday morning, he failed to keep his engagement to take her to church. The next day a messenger appeared to say that "Bankey didn't feel good," though when asked afterwards if he was sick, that youth replied, "Well, mum, not altogether sick, but I've got work at the hotel." It transpired that Bankey thought the messenger he had sent might fill the bill, and he was engaged on trial. A very useful person did Lemuel prove. Not only could he wheel the chair up hill and down dale, but he could tell you the names of most of the strange fruits and flowers; he could go to market with you, interpret



the dialect, and bring home the purchases—an important office, considering the scarcity of paper and string; he could pick up shells judiciously, and row a boat, and drive a horse. On this occasion he placed the chair in position on the side-hill, secured it with a couple of "rocks," and returned home for a stand and other necessities. So provided, the sketchers were soon busily at work. High up on the hill, in the Governor's grounds, a single soldier was furtively watching them. Small children on their way to school, and aged men and women, with great burdens on their heads, came, until perhaps twenty were gathered round; and the crowd kept itself at that figure pretty nearly, though constantly changing in its component parts. It was not like a northern crowd; no one spoke much above a breath; no one asked questions, though all were deeply interested, and kept up a stream of whispered comments. Once an old woman of grave aspect came and scattered them, but others soon took their place. At first the pastel artist attracted the most attention with her bright colors, and she was gratified to be assured of her own success by the remarks that came to her ears: "That's the sky!" "See the arch!" But after a while the company became aware that the more sober picture had become a figure sketch. For a while the good Lemuel, greatly scandalized by the conduct of his compatriots, endeavored to keep them off. "Leave!" he cried indignantly, but without raising his voice. (A Yankee boy would have shouted.) "Hawgs! hain't no sense. Stan' roun' both'rin' de ladies! You all know I could get a policeman and have you taken up. You act like de brutes!"

"No more bruter dan you be," replied a bright little girl to this tirade. "Do peoples gets taken up in dis country fur stan' in de street?"

After this Lemuel discreetly retired, and maintained a scowling silence, while this particular child danced and plumed herself before him most of the forenoon, apparently unconscious of the large tray of sapodillas on her head. One thinly clad youngster, carrying a square oil-can full of "pigeon corn," set it down, and placed himself on it, but most of them stood patiently from one to three hours, looking on, and only annoying from their numbers. The sketcher, who feared a sudden removal of Lemuel's "rocks," and a consequent slide down the hill backwards, tried to induce the laggards with slates, to go to school.

"When does school begin?"

"'Bout ten, missus."

"Well, it is long after ten. Hadn't you better be going?"

"Oh, missus, it make no differ. School not *full* yet."

And evidently nothing did "make differ" in this lotus land. Then she tried diplomacy. They soon perceived that when she fixed her eyes steadfastly on one of them, and made marks on her paper, something was going on of special interest.

"Hah! dere's Coralina havin' her likeness." "Gustus, did yo' know yo' bein' took?" "How much she give yo' for gettin' yo' likeness, Toney?"

An enormous basket of palmetto-leaves, drawn by one of the curious little horses indigenous to the place, stopped on its way over the hill, and the driver

got out to share in the popular excitement ; presently a clumsy farm-cart, likewise indigenous, accompanied by a woolly donkey, swelled the procession. This diverted the crowd a little. One and another cried, "Oh, de poor jackass ! Drive him on out'n de sun. He'll strain hisself stan'in' on de side hill."

The party was not driven off the field, but they elected to go soon after this ; they gathered their materials together, thanked the spectators for their kind attention, and departed amid the respectful observances of the crowd. Lemuel preserved a dignified silence all the way home. When rallied on his attempts at governing, he merely remarked contemptuously that they were "born so." By this time school was "done gone out," and the truants indifferently took their way homewards. One of the small spectators, he of the oil-can, showed a continuing interest in the dissatisfied artist. She was completing the sketch several days afterwards, at a window looking out on the front veranda, when a round, laughing face flattened itself against the jalousies,—a really pretty black face, which drew back precipitately as soon as observed. But the voice belonging to it was presently heard announcing to a companion, "She makin' a picter. She take me down, upon de hill." It needed only a little coaxing to put both boys at their ease, and Christopher Alexander Stirrup, as he promptly gave his name, proceeded to make all manner of inquiries about the sketch.

"You tuk me down, missus, didn't you ?" he asked. "Does you 'member dat gal wid de yams ? Dat gal dat wore a pink dress, an' a ruffle to her neck ?"

The artist thought she remembered, and he proceeded :

"Dat gal my sister. You put her down too. Say, missus, couldn't you just look at me now, an' take me off'n a paper?"

Fearing from past experience that this meant a request for a copper, the artist became more reticent, and Christopher Alexander took himself away for that time. But often afterwards, when at that window, the same interested little face was discovered silently gazing at her, and if she made any sign, she would be greeted with, "Say, missus, couldn't you jes take me down?"

I think that Lemuel must have some secret sorrow. I am at a loss to account otherwise for his isolation, and his supercilious manner to his own kind. If a boy or girl persists in walking by his side, or following the chair in spite of his orders, he puts on an air of gloomy dignity ; but he often apologizes to me for his ill manners afterwards. It may be that part of this isolation comes from an unfortunate tendency to stammer, though that peculiarity is by no means rare. Yesterday, when I sat on the beach, looking out over the beautiful colors in the harbor, I noticed a schooner passing over the bar, and asked Lemuel where she came from.

"Oh, from the Out-Islands, mum, mos' likely,—Exuma, or Eleuthera."

"And does she bring a cargo, Lemuel?"

"Yes, missus, c-c-c—"

"Corn?" I said to help him, though I smiled at the idea, not having yet seen any green corn.

"No, mum, not corn, but c-c-c—"

"Coal?" For charcoal is a common article of sale.

"No, mum ; I mean c-c-c-c-o-t-t-o-n, missus."

"Oh, then you can spell, Lemuel!" I exclaimed, diverted from the question of freights.

"Yes, mum ; I've been through the school"; and I found he meant the highest government school, where he paid eight-pence a month for the privilege. I asked him if he would take me there, and so I solved the problem of education in New Providence, which question had perplexed me not a little.

"Is that all?" as Benita suddenly paused, and showed no disposition to favor the listeners further.

"I have written about the schools, but I thought perhaps you had heard enough for this time, and Barbara has finished her letter."

"Very well," said Bee. "She may read it, and we will go to school afterwards."

"Yes," said the Mother, "I should like to hear what she has said in this letter. Won't the people at home be astonished?"

X.

CONCERTS.—A LONG STROLL.—BOTANIZING.

NASSAU, March 16.

DEAR ALL OF YOU : What a charming budget you sent us by the last steamer! And how we gloat over your accounts of the weather, that foe to all that is good and noble in our nature. How delightful to read of Mr. H's wading to the post-office on the very morning when we were sailing away and away over the warm water! But why, dear Archeress, did *you* keep your miseries to yourself? Had the Shakespere Club greater claims upon you, or the French conversation? Answer at once, or you will never hear me tell any more of our adventures. Dear "Colorado Woman," we know how your water-pitcher used to freeze between your stove and your blazing fireplace, and we don't expect *you* to do more than exist till the springtime comes. But F. B., with the new "steam plant," keeping you so thoroughly comfortable, that not all the raw winds that have their parade-ground in Chicago can do you harm, why are you mute? Good and sufficient reasons you may have, but why not tell us what they are?

For many weeks we had heard about Fox Hill. Poser Estelle, who brings us clean 'dillas every mor-

ning, says she lives there. I asked her next morning if she lived in Grant's Town, and she said she did. This morning she told another member that she "stopped just obah de hill in Bain Town." Such is the state of mind of the soberest small-fruit woman I know. Is it lack of veracity? I question. Far rather would I think that Poser is ignorant of location, or that she did not understand. We asked the distance to Fox Hill, and its direction, of Aunt Isabel. "To de east'ard, my darlin', an' I lay it's 'bout a mile—not more funder dan a mile an' half *nohow*, missus." Our intelligent carpenter said he should "lay it at a mile." It was March 17th. Fancy Beatrix in her butterfly cambric that she wore last August, and me in my black and white checked gingham. We both had twelve-cent palmetto hats, trimmed with muslin, and ribbons tied over the broad brims thereof. Trix carried her tin botanical box, and I, a light palmetto basket, trowel, and knife. Also we had smoked glasses to wear if needed, for sometimes the glare from the white roads, and the radiated heat from the walls is trying. Thus equipped, we stepped lightly away through the Arch over Government Hill, down the road that leads to Grant's Town. In this interesting place everybody was out of doors, of course,—chickens, pigs, children, and dogs tumbling around together in the stony yards, under the cabins,—which are usually set up about three feet from the ground,—and in the streets. "Ahsk de lady fah coppah, Sammy," or Johnny, or Mandy, was a frequent adjuration. A big girl of sixteen bounced out of a house, and called, "Gi' me tuppence, missus?" We have fallen into

German conversation upon these occasions, and we hurl long Meisterschaft sentences at random. I'm afraid our patient *Fräulein* would shrug her shoulders were she by the roadside. We wanted to see a mango tree, and a woman went a long distance out of her way to "carry" us there. Another gave us sapodillas, that we might see if we didn't want more, and showed us "alligator peers," which are not yet "full." As usual, a flock of children followed in our rear, and as often as we stopped to gather a fern, or pick an especially fine head of wild-coffee, they would dart up with whole handfuls of ferns and coffee. At last we left the thatched cabins behind us, and our rear-guard fell away, with curiosity sated.

The road was between walls ; upon one side a coconut plantation, on the other uncleared land. What a tangled growth of strange shrubs and vines appeared to our eyes ! There was the wild tamarind, with leaves resembling a honey-locust, and just now the tender foliage was pink and red and brown ; there was the wild sapodilla, with its curious mauve flowers ; others we did not know at all ; there was a wild cherry, a shrub with clusters of blossoms running through all gradations of color from white to dark-red ; wild coffee, of which we can never see enough ; a lovely, blue-spiked flower, followed by pretty orange berries. Next came a sturdy vine, if you can call anything a vine that doesn't twine, or have tendrils, or even regular leaves for that matter. It had a slender, wiry stem, no larger than a fine knitting-needle, and every two or three inches apart on this stem were whorls of fine, needle-like leaves two inches long. It suggested



a glorified asparagus, and made us think of sedges, and it grew up over the bushes in lengths of ten or twelve feet. They call it "Old Man's Beard." Presently a little shriek of joy escaped from Trix, who was in advance, and I, following her outstretched hand, saw a passion-vine waving its standard from the top of a high bush. It had lovely, dark-red blossoms and many buds; the bush was stiff and thorny, and the vine too high for even my long arms to reach. A good old auntie must have heard us bewailing our sad fate, for from her bit of garden close at hand she brought a crooked piece of sugar-cane, and helped us to secure the coveted prize. The people are so kind and obliging always, that we cannot help liking them very much. On we fared, finding even choicer plunder in the various "air-plants" that were perched sociably all over the low bushes. Three separate kinds we found to bring home and tie on our bananas, where they go on growing contentedly, and by and by we shall have them in flower. Real air-plants, or epiphytes, are these, for they simply twist their few roots around some friendly twig, that they may have a local habitation; then they take their life from the air alone, storing up dew and rain in the bases of their cunningly curved leaves. One kind was pale-green and succulent, another curiously streaked with darker green, and its leaves were arranged in a spiral. We chose, and chose, and chose, till we could take no more. Then, wonder of all, we stumbled upon some real hot-house orchids. Great masses of them grew upon decaying stumps, or small logs; colonies of them stood upon convenient limbs, and one, some sort of

*oncidium* I should say, gave us its tall spike of yellow, and brown flowers, looking exactly like "freakish butterflies." We fell into a long silence as we hustled out our duplicate air-plants, and tenderly filled their places with orchids, till at last Beatrix said, "Isn't it ridiculous, Barb, but all this afternoon I've been haunted by two lines out of some old hymn, just these two,—

" Prophets and kings desired it long,  
But died without the sight."

"That's not at all ridiculous," I said, "haven't we always had a weakness for orchids?" and then I told her how my "hant" had been,

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood  
Stand dressed in living green,"

along with another couplet equally *apropos* to Nassau,

"There everlasting spring abides,  
And never-withering flowers."

Next we came upon an eerie thing, that I truly thought was a snake at, first. It was a little larger than my thumb, cylindrical except for two grooves that flattened it, of uniform size for ten feet, with no branches, no leaves, no buds, not *anything* except that at the very slight angles which occurred about five inches apart, a stiff brown wire projected for an inch. "Dot's worm-plant, missus," said an obliging passer-by. "We gives it to little babies in de young moon." As we went on we gathered rare and dainty ferns from the honeycombed surface of the rock. In the little pockets they had sprung up as if by magic, growing with all the grace and beauty that is the birthright of the fern, which Thoreau says

"Nature made for pure leaves, just to see what she could do in that line." By what subtle alchemy tender roots can transmute limestone into such airy forms must always remain a marvel. We came upon another orchid that simply sent its bare flower-scape out of the hard rock, and we wielded the trowel, and bore away its tuber. Then came ferns, and ferns, and orchids and orchids, till we couldn't bear any more. For a mile, at least, we had passed no cabin. People constantly met us carrying heavy burdens of wood upon their heads, all moving towards Nassau. Twice we saw little babies tied upon their mothers' backs with pieces of coffee-sacking. Small boys wore only one thin and sadly abbreviated garment, and Bèatrix never failed to laugh at the curious little "bosoms" that adorned the front. If any of them chanced to wear a second garment, it was a waist of some description. We trudged on for at least two miles of this lonely road.

"Is it far to Fox Hill?" we asked an old wood-woman.

"Oh, yesy, missy,—good, longy way."

"Can we go on so," motioning ahead, "and find a road that will take us back to the city?"

"Oh, yesy, missy. Go lilly mo' faddah so, two road,—you settey face so,—you go town."

On we tramped, with fresh courage, for half a mile, when we came to a side-road that seemed to have been newly made, for no trace of wagon-track was visible over the small, sharp stones. Do you think we would risk even our stout walking-boots upon such a thoroughfare? It was worse than the rockiest

bit of Cape Ann. We turned about and trudged ignominiously back over the long miles, foiled as to Fox Hill, but triumphing in our spoils.

Oh, I must tell you that the gooseberry-tree in the next yard has flowered. The little flowers are on stems twice as long as currant stems, and the tree is covered with them; they even grow out of the trunk way down to the ground. Nothing is more surprising than the rapid growth of vegetation. When we arrived, the almond-trees were arrayed in dark red leaves, which one day came fluttering down, but in ten days new leaves appeared, and it seems to me that they were in full foliage again in three weeks. The leaves are thick, dark-green, and shining, reminding one of a rhododendron many times enlarged. We are still delighting in roses, and roses of our very own. Every morning we pick handfuls of them, and after lunch there are more fresh-blown ones. Was it not provident in us to bring some potpourri jars down here, where roses and orange-flowers do abound?

These botanical prowlings of ours are hard upon Benita, for she will paint *everything*; but she is growing plump—and actually sunburns very nicely.

March 22.

We went yesterday to St. Matthew's, which boasts of being the oldest church edifice on the island, dating back to 1800, and it is really very quaint. Concrete floor, with wood under the seats, so that one steps up into the pews; queer old chairs; rounded end of church gave a chancel ten feet wide and only four deep; garnet velvet hangings of altar were trimmed with strips

and borders of drawn work, that looked like rare and beautiful lace; old-fashioned, three-legged stand, covered by white linen with more drawn work, and the same lovely work adorned the sacramental napkin. We had a good little sermon on charity, and good-singing from a well-trained choir. The church is full of memorial tablets, and stands in an ancient burial-ground. I am advised by the Almanack, in which I implicitly trust, that "the windows are in the early Norman style." We walked about under the budding oleanders, and spelled out inscriptions that have been dimmed by the long years since they were chiseled. Most of the tombs resemble high, broad chests; occasionally a tablet is just above the surface, and there are a few standing upright and a few in the shape of "monuments." Reading the inscriptions leads one to conclude that since these people have gone, little virtue or worth can possibly be left upon the earth. One, in Spanish, had underneath it this translation: "Bury here my body, for the earth, the mother of all, covers what she has produced. Beloved children, faithful husband, recommend me to the divine mercy."

A negro, in natural costume, was digging a grave with an axe. It takes all day, Lemuel says. The soil in this place was about a foot deep, and the grave is four feet in depth when completed.

BEERSHEBA, March 24.

It rains! it rains! but we fear it will not rain long. We want rain on our "garden stuff" and on our roses, and on the oranges. I ought to be sewing in

the sleeves of a dress, but when I think of you, poor weather-bound people, I feel as if I must tell you that Paradise exists, that so there may be pith to your imaginings and longings.

We paid seventy-two cents apiece for the privilege of reserved seats at a concert, in the Church Hall opposite, where there is a school of boys every day. It was for the benefit of a Cornet Band, and was advertised as "under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency and Mrs. Blake." We went over at the proper time—eight o'clock—and after much tribulation on the part of the fussy, bungling usher, were seated in our chairs, which gave a good view of the unadorned hall. There was no glass in the windows, only inside shutters. Chandeliers were there, with candles in queer, vase-shaped chimneys; a grand piano bore one bouquet, and two others dangled down from the leader's music-stand. With palms, and ferns, and vines, what a bower of beauty might have been made! We had barely time to interchange these sentiments before the whole audience arose and sang,

"God save our gracious Queen,  
God save our noble Queen,  
God save our Queen!"

and then sat down. It was comical in its effect, though an expression of loyalty to the powers that be; and it marked the advent of the Governor's party, who had stepped in hatless, bonnetless, gloveless, in a decidedly informal fashion.

Well, the cornets blew, the drums sounded, a terrible "March" smote upon the air, and the audience applauded. Applauded, did I say? Went wild is

truer, for they stamped, they clapped, they pounded on floor and chairs with canes, they whistled and they yelled in such an impartially demoniac way after each "song," as they styled a vocal solo, duet, or chorus—that I came to dread the close of any number. I have been in many mixed audiences; but I *never* heard such noise from human beings. The singers, on the contrary, were subdued to the last degree. There were twenty-four of them about the grand piano, and, remembering similar amateur concerts in our own music-loving town, we were struck with the marked difference in the bearing of the performers. Here, every face was composed into a quiet that was awful to see; no vivacious, sparkling, animated countenances, but a settled woe appeared to weigh upon the exuberance of youth, and the young men looked as if they would be thankful to disappear through the singers' platform. The leader, a courtly man, wielded his baton with grace and effect. At the piano was the talented organist of the cathedral, a lady of sixty years, perhaps, who looked as if she had just sat for one of the first daguerreotypes, with hair combed down over her forehead—and did she wear puff-combs? These people sang like seraphs. The choir gave four choruses charmingly—"Hardy Norsemen," "Blow, gentle gales," "Sands of Dee," and chorus from "*La Fille de Madame Angot*." There were two duets and ten solos upon the program, but each and every one of them was encored lustily, and a response compelled. "M' appari" from Martha was given by a fine tenor in some unknown tongue,—certainly not

in Italian "as she is spoke" in the concert-room. The audience thirsted for humorous song, and some sorry specimens were given by a man who couldn't sing, but who could make wonderful twists with his facial muscles, and drop words faster than he twanged his banjo strings. Let me give you a specimen of the humor that enchants a Nassau audience, for I happen to remember the chorus of one of his songs. It ran thus :—

"For the bulls *woant* bellow and the cows *woant* low,  
The hens *woant* cackle and the cocks *woant* crow,  
The turkeys *woant* gobble and the geese *woant* quack,  
And they never, never will till me *Jane* comes back."

As a whole, we enjoyed the concert. The choir was in admirable training, and the soloists were very pleasing in manner as well as in song. It looked a little odd that each of the latter took the leader's arm as if going out for an evening stroll. Their talent lies in vocal music rather than in the command of any instrument.

We saw a hen on the turtle counter in the fish market this morning, and I said to Aunt Jamaica, whose stand is very near :

"Do tell me what is the matter with that hen?" for her aspect was most strange.

"Oh, missus, she is jes' come from out-island, 'n' she sea-sick. Tide verrah low, missus." Since then we have seen another similar fowl, and find that her feathers were put on wrong-side-up, so that they curl away from her body. Probably they are natives of some hot island, where close-lying plumage would be as oppressive as wool to a tropical sheep, which have



nothing but a little coarse hair, and are never shorn.

Our marketing this morning resulted in some steak, half a cabbage, a quart of chicken corn, lettuce, radishes, beets, twenty-four bananas, sapodillas and tamarinds. Our consumption of fruit verges on the supernatural, but never again shall we buy sugar bananas "three for a cent"—think of it! or pines for four cents. We sent Lemuel home, and set off to explore the vicinity of Fort Fincastle, a curious old ruin on the ridge east of the hotel, erected in 1789, and now used simply for a signal station. It is not large and imposing like its sister Charlotte, but very queer and usually likened to some kind of queer paddle-box steamer, I believe, though how its high walls running eastward to an acute angle are like a steamer I can not see. A few rods further east we came out to the top of the Queen's Staircase, a flight of sixty steps cut out of the solid rock. The approach to them, which is many yards long, is also quarried out. As we passed a little corner shop we heard a school-room hum, and asked if we might enter. A very tidy colored woman was training the youthful minds of twelve small girls and one diminutive boy. All were clean and very bright looking. Each girl had a sponge and a cloth tied around her neck, and frequent were the adjurations to each other, "Gertrude, clean your slate," "Seera, [Sarah] clean your slate," for at the time of entrance they were busy "doing sums," and continually running to a multiplication table written on brown paper that hung over their bench. I was especially impressed by the *coiffures* of these dam-

sels, for all were elaborate and no two alike. That of Florentia was striking. The portion of her tresses that would be given up to bangs in America was braided in five little tails; the ends of these came half-way down her forehead, and were tied together by some means quite unseen. Then a very straight parting was made down to the nape of her neck; four triangular plots were laid off upon either side of this highway, and from the center of each one of the eight triangles projected a short, stiff braid. I could lay out a ground-plan of that head! We had to see their slates, and praise their copy-books, and hear them sing "Kind words can never die"; and didn't we fervently wish that little Americans could sing half as well? It was a private school, and the tuition was nine cents a week!

Near by rose the hum of another dame school, which we asked permission to enter. Here was a group of boys and girls,—mixed as to color; a lively place where the cast-iron discipline of our vaunted free schools was entirely unknown. A lesson in arithmetic was going on. Our teacher propounded the question, "What are compound numbers?" Then, without pausing, she dashed into the answer, leaving an occasional ellipsis to be filled by her youthful charges in concert. The answer being thus achieved, the instructress repeated it again by herself. During the recitation she was continually breaking off to glower at some luckless urchins near, and to say—or to shout rather—"Be-*have* yourselves, can't you?" One persistent little fellow, who haunted her with his slate, was forcibly addressed: "Go back! Sit down,

will you? Do your *own* sum." And then she would grab her bell, and ring it for order. In an instant she would go on with her class, all sweetness and encouragement to a stumbling reader,—“Speak up now, darling,” “Louder,” “Not too fast”; and then in apology to us she remarked of the reader, “She went through with it *beau-ti-fully* to me this morning. She’s a little bashful now.”

I don’t feel at all qualified to sit in judgment on a Nassau school. Perhaps if I had never been off a small island, and only communicated with the living world at long intervals, I should lose *all* energy. I am sure that antiquated school-books, and chalk in the lump, would so reduce me that I couldn’t even say, “*Be-have* yourselves!” Children are a very subdued set here. As Beatrix says, “*They* have the climate, and *we* have the brains.” The only marvel is that they even learn the multiplication table.

Don’t you wonder, dear housekeepers, how we exist without a cellar, a dumb waiter, a refrigerator, and a water-cooler? We have nothing to keep in a cellar, so that disposes of one of the northern essentials. “Damp, unhealthy places,” they are termed here. Some one asks about all these bare floors. Our washerwoman, who avers that she was “brought up in a house ‘n’ train all correc’ by white folks” sent me a scrubber whom she thoroughly indorsed. “Wen I smell de pine, I know de lady a good scrubber,” said Mary Lightbourn; so I sent off the artists one breezy morning, and prepared to keep an eye upon my servant, Mandy Want. The “lady” appeared, a “fine figger of a woman,” clad in a stiffly starched

pale-blue print gown that trailed grandly in her wake, —so majestic a personage that I was greatly awed by her presence, yet I plucked up my courage, and tried to appear as if dignified scrubbers, like her, were an every-day event to me. First, I had to give her “thrippence” to go and buy a certain kind of blue-speckled soap that she considered essential; second, she wouldn’t use my good orthodox scrubbing-brush; and what do you suppose she insisted on? You can’t guess, and I may as well tell you that Lemuel was dispatched to the fish-market for two-cents’ worth of turbot-skin. While waiting for this, she asked me in a stage-whisper for “some apartment” where she could change her “appar’l.” I directed her to the vacant attic, from which she descended shoeless and stockingless, with a yellow calico jacket greatly patched upon by divers other colors and fabrics, and a scanty skirt of coffee-sacking, that was remarkable for its brevity. Then down upon her two stout knees went the transformed “lady,” with a pail of cold water, a cloth, and the rough fish-skin. She scrubbed and she scrubbed, and she washed, and she dried, while every now and then she slapped the floor exactly as if it were a refractory child; and all that she did from 9 A.M. till 12:30 was to scour the drawing-room and veranda. Yet I ought not to complain, for every vein of the wood seemed fairly alive with her polishing. She pretended to ask seventy-five cents a day, and said that she wanted a dollar for the work she did; yet she was entirely satisfied, I am sure, with thirty-six cents, which is the usual price.

The funny expressions we hear are countless.

Fruit is never ripe, but "full," and school is "full" when it opens: our boatmen wait "on" us, not "for" us; we "catch" a chicken when we buy it; we buy "swelled" guavas for jelly; we "meet up" with people; a shower is a "squall"; a seamstress "tasted" my sleeves instead of binding them. When they offer anything for sale they generally use a negative, as "You don' wan' no cook?" "Not no tings fah soup?" A woman showed us some shells,—the curiously marked "mickery-mockery," the polished "fillymingo's tongue," and the "cockyroach wing." "What does make these curious stripes?" I said. "Oh, I don' know, missus, 'less de Mahstah make it so. He make all things in a myste'ous way."

"But what are the disadvantages of Eden?" some one asks; and I scan our situation to answer you in all good faith, my dear E——, that I can find none greater than the lack, or scarcity, of milk. As we make no desserts, and need none, preferring fruit to anything ever yet beaten, stirred, boiled, or baked, the use of milk is reduced to the tempering of tea and coffee, though I might use the real article on hominy if I could get it. It is very true that many of you would not be contented a fortnight here. You would miss postal privileges for one thing. We miss them—in a general way. But we are not frittering away time and brains over daily papers, or many weeklies either, only two having followed us on our outing. We miss—oh, how pleasantly—the mighty current of free literature that brims our waste-basket at home; we miss the tramp, and the book-agent, who has made the life of one of us a continual warfare; and the

venders of all useful inventions ; and the sellers of all sorts of humbugs ; and the man who wishes to enlarge our photographs ; and the man who thinks his college is the very place where we ought to lend a hand,—all this illustrious army is safe across seas, and we are only besought for coppers. Great is the change for us ; great is the rest thereof ; great are our peace and our content. Would you could all drink of the same cup of healing.”

“That is the very best letter yet,” announced the Mother. “But the history of those fowls isn’t finished. You’ll have more to tell next time, only I don’t see how you know the way to spell their names.”

“Now for the schools,” said Bee.

And Benita read:

## XI.

### HOW THEY ARE EDUCATED.

**I**N pursuance of a general thirst for information, one member of the family set out to visit some of the schools. It took time to discover that these were "in," as the children expressed it, only from ten to two, with a brief intermission at twelve o'clock, called "lunch"; and the sight of the youth of this country playing, or wandering languidly as was more frequently the case, in the streets, at hours scrupulously devoted to study in higher latitudes, was bewildering. The colored children went by early in the day with slates, which they carried on their heads in place of the sugar-cane which usually occupied that position. It appeared to make no difference whether they went or not. If accosted towards noon with an inquiry on the subject, they always announced their good intentions with cheerful indifference. Evidently, the only way to satisfy curiosity was to go and see.

Accordingly, the first school the visitor could locate was taken by storm. It was in the Sunday-school room, as we should call it, of one of the churches, though at some rods distance from the church; for the lecture-room in this curious country occupies the same position in regard to the church that the kitchen

does to the house. The bell was hung in a queer little belfry near by, also a curious arrangement. Some of these bird-houses on a pole hold a tea-bell scarcely larger than those which do duty here for door-bells, standing outside the door on a bracket. The square stone structure stood with its large doors open to the four quarters of heaven. By the side of the path and all over the yard grew roses, hibiscus and lantana. The mistress sat exactly in the doorway. She was "black but comely," and her hair was "done up" in two perpendicular twists. She rose, and accorded permission to enter, not without a gracious dignity which would have elicited remark elsewhere. A dozen children were standing in a circle close to her, with tiny books which looked like old-fashioned primers. The visitor was offered one of these, and the first line of each lesson literally pointed out to her. She heard the sweet little voices drawling on in regular cadence an easy description of a sledge-drive with reindeer in Spitzbergen, and she looked dreamily out of doors, and wondered if it would do any good to exhort these butterflies to read with more expression. What *could* express frost and snow to them? Her attention was distracted to the rest of the school, numbering perhaps fifty, all under ten or twelve, and all standing, to her great bewilderment, for there were plenty of seats. After a while, she saw that they stood in groups, each group surrounding a child who took the place of monitor; and presently a din arose from these quarters which betokened a spelling exercise. Operations were suspended right speedily for the entertainment of the



visitor, who was invited to a seat on the platform, to hear the school sing. She stepped carefully over the tombstone of Mr. Somebody, possibly the founder of the school or some other high personage, and took her place beside the teacher, who handed her a book of songs, neatly copied by herself in a pretty round hand. Then the children ranged themselves in rows, and sang glees and hymns and roundelays which no northern school would attempt. Some of the scholars were so pretty, and all of them were such fine singers, that it was indeed an entertainment to sit there. The unaccustomed spectator opened her eyes as they sang a hymn of praise beginning—

“ I love the Catholic church,  
I love her holy faith,  
I love her altars, temples, priests,  
I'll love them until death.”

The babies bowed at the mention of the church, and crossed themselves at the name of Christ, all through this hymn ; their piquant, black faces and bright dresses made the ceremonial seem something uncanny. The singing would probably have continued through the session, had it not occurred to the audience that she was receiving “too much for the money.” The teacher accompanied her to the door, and the school bowed her out with quaint respect.

“ *Ab uno disce omnes* ” is a proverb that does not apply in this case, as one would naturally suppose, for the next school, a mile farther on, offered her a very different entertainment. It was a larger room and had more and older pupils. Two mistresses sat, one on each side of the open door, and both rose to wel-

come the new-comer. Her chair was placed near the others, as if for a private talk with the teachers, instead of a view of the school, which appeared to be mostly behind her; but in seating herself she was suddenly struck dumb with the sight in front. About forty children were seated near the opposite wall on three benches forming a step-ladder structure, and so high were these steps that the heads of the highest pupils came very near the ceiling. She had no time, however, to speculate on the meaning of this, for a marching exercise was immediately ordered, and the scholars began to arrange themselves. They sang glees, beginning with "Round and round and round we go," and around the visitor they did indeed go till her head was dizzy. One of the teachers led the singing, and the other issued various orders, changing the position of arms and the length of steps, with the precision of machinery. The children on the ladder kept their places, but they stood up, and followed all the movements, adding to the confusion of the scene, when suddenly, without a word of direction, they began to descend in regular order, and the column filed out of the door. "Lunch," one of the teachers announced, and on bowing herself out, the visitor perceived a fine-looking colored woman distributing buns and sapodillas from a tray on her head. The children stood round in a pre-occupied way, munching this refection as a part of the regular programme. There was not a trace of the wild hooting and racing so characteristic of the recess in northern schools. The scholars were of different shades, but all colored; many were barefoot, but

many also nicely dressed ; and some of the little ones had a depth of embroidery on collars and dresses that a white mother might covet.

The next morning the visitor, intent on a wider range of information, departed to seek out a higher school. Was there, she asked Lemuel, a school where the boys and girls were taught mathematics and—philosophy, for instance? She pronounced the last word with some hesitancy, but her boy, always equal to any occasion, answered with alacrity:

“Oh yes, missus! Right down dar on dat road you go oder day to take de picture. I take you dere right now, missus. I been troo dat school my own se’f, missis, an’ pay eightpence a month. Dat good school, missus. I take you dar.”

It was a much more pretentious establishment, in the pleasantest part of a very pleasant street, lined with such a display of roses, dracænas, poinsettias, aloes, stephanotis, and such things, that her ardor came near being diverted ; but having safely passed these dangers, she was directed to the back door, and heartily welcomed by the white teacher, who fully answered her ideas of an English master. There were nearly a hundred boys, ranging from ten to sixteen, and after the first lesson a score added themselves to the number, who were sternly dismissed to their seats, with an intimation of later dealings terrible to contemplate.

“They never can understand that time makes any difference,” said the teacher in an apologetic aside. The Scripture lesson was about Joseph and Potiphar, and the review of yesterday’s chapter

was most exhaustive. The school answered in concert, and the questions were suggestive of a long series of previous answers. In a slow and measured tone the master gave the first half, and the last was taken up by the chorus.

"Joseph was taken to—" "Egypt!"

"And kept in—" "Pot-e-phar's house!"

"Where?" "In Pot-e-phar's house."

"There he was put in—" "Prison!"

"He had not mis-be-haved." "He had not—" "Misbehaved."

"Pot-e-phar was mis-in-formed. Pot-e-phar was—" "Misinformed." And so on.

After the exercise it became apparent that there were at least four under-teachers; and an inquiry elicited the information that they were all paid. The teachers were colored, though about a third of the pupils were white, and these appeared to share equally in the cuffs quietly administered by the teachers in their several domains, which were in the same room and close together. The head-master seemed little annoyed by the loud spelling going on in one corner or the reading of a class at his left, but occasionally he called out an admonition to the teachers: "Johnson, what is all that noise in class D?" "Carpenter, cannot you keep better order there?" "Simpson, what is that boy about? Why, the fellow is actually eating his breakfast here." His own class were by this time ranged before his desk, and all appeared to be in running order, when the proceedings were stopped for all those who wished to buy pencils to go to the front and procure them.

The money was paid, but no change was given, and after the lesson another intermission ensued for those who were concerned, to come up and receive their change. Evidently, neither teachers nor scholars were working on time. Books were distributed, and one was given to the visitor,—a thin reader, containing the regulation pieces of an early day. The lesson for that morning was Alexander Selkirk's Soliloquy, and the teaching was a good, if an exaggerated specimen, of routine methods. The boys were fluent readers—of this poem. They pronounced distinctly, "minded their stops," modulated their voices to a perfect imitation of their teacher. They were asked the meaning of nearly every word, and generally knew it; yet an indefinable *something* seemed to the uneasy mind of the listener to be lacking. Was it ideas?

"O Solitude!" cried the immortal Alexander.

"What is solitude?" queried the measured voice of the head-master.

"A condition of lone-liness," chorused the class.

"Where are the charms—"

"What are charms?"

"Attractions."

"Yes, at-trac-tions."

"That sages—"

"What are sages?"

And so on. A question trembled on the visitor's lips, and she ventured to ask the gracious instructor how many of these boys had read Robinson Crusoe; for that very week had witnessed the procession of children to Defoe's tomb, and the proposal to

commemorate his century by a monument to be erected by children. The master looked a little surprised, but he asked the question. Of the fifteen or twenty faces, all remained perfectly blank except two, and these were white. One had only heard of the book.

"Why don't you get it?" asked the master. "It is a good story for you to read."

"It costs too much," said the boy, with convincing candor.

"You might borrow it," said the master, and kindly added a short explanation, which was received with the usual apathetic attention.

A great pity filled the visitor's heart; she said: "After all you have taught them, is there no further development possible? Are there no school libraries, no access to the Public Library?"

"No," was the reply; "that library is not for poor folks."

But here were the slates, with specimens of writing for the visitor to examine. She became breathless with amazement, as she compared her own hasty penmanship with those regular characters, like copper-plate engraving in their neatness. A suspicion was in her mind. Could she see this boy write his name? He came and did it, to his own and his teacher's satisfaction, and to the confounding of the spectator.

"Can you write like that, Lemuel?" she asked her henchman in private.

"Oh, yes, mum," he answered promptly. "I been troo de school."

She took him at his word, but in a subsequent test it appeared that Lemuel had forgotten much of his school learning, so that, whether he could read Alexander Selkirk or not, he could elicit little information from *Harper's Monthly*.

After this a trustee came in, and the visitor gave attention to the class in front of her, writing from dictation with one of the under-teachers, a stolid young man who read entirely after the manner of the boys, sentence by sentence, passing around meanwhile on a perpetual tour of inspection.

"An-e-mals can not live without air," he announced in a loud voice. "Place an an-e-mal under an exhaust-ed—"

"Ex-haust-ed air re-ceiv-er—"

"And it will soon ex-pire."

"Soon expire."

As he came into the vicinity of the visitor she yielded to a spirit of mischief, and, seeing the head-master still engrossed, she accosted the loud reader in a low tone :

"Do they know what an air receiver is ?"

Unbounded surprise expressed itself on the dark face.

"Oh, yes, mum," he answered hastily, in Lemuel's own style. "We have 'em in Nassau frequently."

—"Oh, that will never do in the world," said Bee, in dismay. "They won't like it."

"Like what?" asked Benita. "I don't see anything disreputable in that paper. I consider it 'just the thing,' " with a glance at Bee.

"You must refrain from quotations except on paper ; but really, *dare* we put that in our book ? "

"It is true, isn't it ? " said Benita, "and why shouldn't we tell it ? "

"We ought to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," responded Barbara.

"Children, what is all this talk about ? " said the Mother. "Nobody could find fault with the paper, I'm sure. What is it ? "

"If *she* doesn't find it, I don't believe it's there."



## XII.

CLIMATE.—FRUITS.—TREES.—THE WOMAN'S TONGUE.  
—A LONG DRIVE.

"IT'S half-past seven," remarked Barbara in a very positive tone, "and the audience is seated. I'll wait three-quarters of a minute longer, and then I'm going to begin. Let me pronounce the magic word, *Liber*, if you're not asleep out there."

Beatrice scrambled from the hammock, gave one longing look at the glorious night, and bounced into the drawing-room.

"How could I waste so much time?" she exclaimed in dismay as she drew her chair to the table; "but Barb is forehanded to-night, so we shall have no delays."

"I have only *two* hands, but I have used them to advantage, I hope. It would be a pity to work so hard for nothing. I've writ, and writ, and writ, till it seems to me as if I had turned into a pen. I dreamed that I had, last night,—one of those detestable things that they call fountain pens; and mine was a fountain of tears—ink-tears—that were shed on every occasion. No wonder. Look at these horrid blots. The coming event was plainly foreshadowed."

NASSAU, March 29, 1886.

DEAR FRIENDS IN THE DISTANCE :—I have kindled your curiosity, at all events, for the last steamer

brought in some very question-full letters, and I am glad to answer your queries. Is it very hot? asks one. I can't put my hand on the figures, but it is not *hot*; it is just right, never lower than 68°, and I haven't seen our own thermometer touch any higher mark than 78°, but I believe greater heat has been marked in other places. Are there winds? Yes, delightful breezes rather, but of course the wind doesn't change the mercury, if it does produce other effects. A south wind is hot and debilitating, but it seldom lasts more than half a day at a time, and occurs at long intervals, I am told. An east wind is exasperating, though it may be only me whom it drives almost distracted. It has only given us but two days, and is not any harder to endure than certain New York zephyrs. A north wind *seems* cold; it makes the hens shiver; it ties up the throats and ears of the negroes; they don coats and shawls, only to shiver beneath them all. Our prevailing wind is from the northeast.

I think that the bump of number must be a marked depression in the average African skull. I asked an old woman about her family; if her children—she said she had twelve—were all living. “No, missus; some's dead.” “How many are dead?” “Oh, 'bout four—five. I cahn't rightly tell.”

“How old is your mother, Lemuel?” I asked one day. “Oh, she twenty-eight, mum.” “And you say your sister Blanche is seventeen?” “She is, mum.” “Do you know your grandmother's age?” “She forty-eight, mum.” “She looks much older than that, her hair is so white.” “Well, mum, I put my grand-

mother at fifty-two." It's my impression that they simply make up ages, for Lemuel's mother herself said that she was married at eighteen, that she is now twenty-eight, her oldest daughter seventeen, and that she has had twelve other children !

Sometimes Lemuel shows a reflective turn of mind, as, calling attention to some children, he said, "Dis chile, mum, got more sense'n me. He had moah sense when he bawn, dan *I* had when *I* bawn ; and dis," indicating a younger one, "he got moah sense dan de oder. Ev'y new gen'ration got moah sense, an' I believe it so, mum, all ovah de worl'."

There are two papers printed semi-weekly in Nassau, and that is all. The price is £1 5s. per annum, payable in advance. You can buy a single copy for six cents if you are a subscriber, otherwise you must pay eight. We passed the office of one paper, which is "situate" near to us, and observed that the cases and most of the printers' appliances were established upon an extremely comfortable north porch, where the fortunate compositor could keep an eye upon all the doings of the harbor ; and the perfume of orange-flowers, to correct that of printers' ink, was also most liberally supplied. The "Local Calendar" of this paper is a never-failing amusement to me. There I am told when the first game of polo was played in Nassau ; when S. G.'s club gave a maroon to Captain Strahan ; when the first game of football was played ; when William Cullen Bryant arrived, and a donkey race was run ; of Prince Alfred's landing, and the completion of a slaughter-house ; the presentation of watches to divers gentlemen ; picnics ; Japanese

jugglers ; Mrs. Jarley's Exhibition ; and also various openings of buildings, layings of corner-stones, arrivals of blockade-runners, executions, trials, launches, concerts, etc. It is a never-ending amusement to me, as I said when I began. For instance, July 30, 1879, "Vessel with bones arrived." Whose bones ? Where from ? What for ? For January 22, 1868, I find this cabalistic inscription, "Demd. for Grs. Spngs. for Mtrss. com." With such a queer disregard for vowels, how can we any better decipher the record of October 3?—"Br. Monitor ar. for cave—e'th. from L. Inagua." But this next is even less easily understood : "Ven. House fit. for appli. Dred. Mach." I also notice the "Inauguration of Piano," and wonder if the poor thing took an oath of office ! After the Calendar comes the High Water Table, then Government Notices,—as, for instance, "His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the Reverend——— to be Acting Public Vaccinator for the Island of San Salvador." Next follows some neat little poem. Perhaps one-fourth of the second page is devoted to local events, as much more to telegraphic news,—usually all London news,—and the remainder goes to various post-office notices, and advertisements that are painful for completeness. They are set up in common type, and are the delight of Beatrix. She it is who pounces upon things new and strange, as "Sac Coats," "Gerseys," "colored-edged buttons," etc. What do you think of a firm that advertises pins, common pins ? Many of the shops are without any signs whatever, which adds to the difficulty of trying to find small necessities. Not long since we wanted a

copy of the paper that we don't take, and asked for it in the bookstore. The clerk had none, but she *thought* the office was on Bay Street, and not far off, so we walked along for a block or two, then dodged in, and inquired of the shopkeeper, who "really could not say," and called his clerk. Clerk "couldn't exactly tell," but he thought it must be beyond the big tree. This big tree is one of the curiosities of Nassau, and at present is almost leafless, but it has thousands of pods of a delicate shade of raw sienna all over it. They are thin and tough, and when a breeze stirs them they clash like multitudinous cymbals, and so loudly that it is difficult to carry on conversation even across the street. It is called the "Singing Tree," and also—alas that I must say it!—the "Woman's Tongue." Well, after passing the big tree we inquired our way again, and were directed to a drug-store for further information. It chanced that I wanted a tooth-brush, and after choosing from a stock of two, we were directed to a certain back door and the stairs leading up to the office. At the top of the stairs we entered the first open door, only to behold the Spanish consul, Señor Don Enrique Ortiz y Pi, whom we used to see at the hotel. He indicated the sanctum of the *Times*, and our errand was soon despatched. Will you please reflect upon the fact that we had not walked more than five minutes' distance? And then reflect upon the lack of enterprise, or even common intelligence, manifested by business people and old residents.

Drainage? The houses that have no cisterns for storage of rain-water have gutters about them; upon either side of the street are open gutters, which are

bridged over by stone slabs opposite one's door and gate ; these run into wide drains which lead into the ocean. I consider this simple system a perfect one. Where these gutters cross the streets they are covered by cedar timbers, and we were edified this week by the way in which they do slight jobs. The crossing was fifteen feet long. Two men brought their round cedar sticks, a yard in length ; then they sat down and leisurely squared them, taking up two or three old ones at a time, and replacing them with new ones. They finished that job in two days !

We do not like to go about with a driver ; he's just one too many for us, and he has the spirit of young Lochinvar, who "stopped not for stick and who stayed not for stone." We are always wanting to halt for the view, or to prowl along a new bit of shore, or hunt for passion-flowers and orchids among the chapparal, while it is Lochinvar's only business to keep his nag going, and get around to the stables as soon as he can. Last week an obliging livery-man trusted us with a nag, a certain John, that he vouched for as a perfectly safe beast, "not fast but sure." So John we chartered, and off we started, if we can call his pace a start. We *shooed* him, we *chucked* him, we shook the lines, we flourished the whip ; but all the effect that even the whip produced was a slight quiver in the posterior portion of his body. We thought of our own good steed, always ready either to loiter with us, or to speed away like an arrow from a bow ; and when we see Dandy again we shall appreciate his admirable qualities as never before. Our road lay along the shore, or within sight of the sea, for nearly all the

seven miles. We admired, as usual, the beautiful sea-grape, that is commonly a bush about as high as a sumach, though occasionally we saw it as a great tree with a trunk a foot in diameter. We wondered again at the all-day-long morning-glories and at many beautiful and nameless plants; and after trying to rouse John's apathy, we decided that we wished to go just as slowly as possible, so that Silver Cay might last, and Delaport Bay continue. Once upon a time, when our own country was young, New Providence seems to have been divided up into "estates" that were tilled, so far as there was any tillage, by slave labor. The list of their high-sounding names is given in the Almanack. They are a mixture of the poetical and the practical; there are among others Buen Retiro, Goshen, De la Porte, Farm, Jericho, Ivanhoe, Killarney, Mount Horeb, Mount Hermon, Pen, Sans Souci, Orchard, Wood's Hope, and Venus' Grove. From their present appearance, it would seem that labor was principally expended upon laying up stone walls, so much of the land has reverted to a state of nature. It is not uncommon to see walls four feet high, upon either side of a yard-wide lane. We passed several cocoanut groves that are in their very prettiest stage of growth; the trees are about fifteen feet high, their large fronded leaves starting directly from the ground, making them look like rows of gigantic, olive-green ferns. In a few years these lower leaves will be gone, leaving scars in their places on the slender stems; there will be a swell just above the ground as large as a barrel; the trunk will not be more than two feet in diameter, but it may be a

hundred feet high, and each leaf of its lofty crown may be twenty feet long. These leaves are surprisingly heavy, and when I found that one was all I could lift, I ceased to wonder that the winds, pushing against such a barrier, should give almost every tree a decided slant to leeward. We do not see plantations of bananas, but as surely as there is a pit-hole ten feet deep, there are bananas in it. We suppose they are so planted to protect them from the wind. The leaves are exceedingly tender, and hang from the leaf-stalk like a green tape fringe; sometimes ours fringe out before the long leaf-bud has unrolled. We came to a low, wet place, and there beheld the cat-tail, just as it grows at home, and tall sedges; back of these were palmettos, and aloes, and century-plants. Yes, we saw a group of twelve century-plants in blossom! And there were quantities of some kind of lily, growing out of pure sand, with leaves a yard long, and bulbs as large as a turnip. Some of these I pulled up by main strength, and set down in our garden, where they will go on growing till the dreaded time when we shall look our farewell upon these sunny skies, and these happy, happy shores.

Our objective point was the "Caves," or "Petty's Hill." We saw nothing cave-like, and had actually gone up the hill when we met two women, with a donkey-load of fodder. "A merciful man is merciful to his beast," says the old proverb, and you should have seen Mary Jane Wilkin bracing against a front wheel, while Georgiana Lorimer pulled back on a hind wheel. Mary Jane it was who "carried" us by a devious path



to the hill of rock, and showed us the black opening that yawned above unknown depths; and it was Mary Jane who gathered some delightful little ferns from a hollow in the rock, and wrapped them carefully in broad leaves. But the cave was very dark; no guide was obtainable; Georgiana said it was full of bats. So Benita sketched it, and we turned our face homeward. Oh, what a drive it was! The breakers were rolling grandly; the sea was changing every minute; the air was bland; we were all there; and John was "safe," as we remarked to each other often. We passed some hotel people who were gathering palmetto-leaves by the roadside, and their horse was so incensed that he jumped straight up from the ground, and squealed like a pig.

As time is no particular object to us—some of you will be amazed to find that is even Bee's state of mind—and as John proved himself to be thoroughly "safe," we set out for Fox Hill one afternoon. Very gradually, for we "could no other," we went on down the hill to Grant's Town, and there we walked, or crawled along, to the great delight of the seniors, who had only been through here *à la* Lochinvar. Now they could look leisurely at a tall mango, with its clustered green fruit. They could see exactly the shape and color of the cocoanut flower, and it is not unlike that of Indian corn; they soon identified the sapodilla, with its abundant glossy foliage; and we could show them the star-apple, that has leaves about the size of our beech-tree, and the under side of each leaf is of a bright Havana brown; and we saw the mammee, tall and beautiful, and full of light-green

globes that presently will be worth eating; and everywhere was the Avocado pear, which the natives call "alligator peer," a stately tree, that is just setting tiny fruit on long racemes. All of the orange tribe were familiar to us long ago, and the papaw, or papaia, that looks like a perverted cocoanut; its rough, thick stem never grows more than twelve feet high, and its few leaves at the top are not like ferns, but five-parted, and deeply cleft like a watermelon; its fruit is an orange-colored muskmelon, soft, sweet, and good—for those who like it, but we haven't yet been numbered among its lovers. Kingsley says that if any meat is wrapped up in its leaves it will become tender almost at once, and that it is planted at every cabin door in Trinidad to serve this useful purpose. If we find this to be true, we will secure some young trees for the benefit of our friends. Tamarinds, like great locusts, were occasionally seen, and the light-green foliage of the gooseberry.

After jogging about the principal roads of Bain's Town, we struck off towards Fox Hill, but how slowly! For I was continually entreated to step down and cut some specially beautiful flower or plant. The great prize of this excursion was a passion vine that has leaves like the African granadilla, and seed-pods (or capsules the botanist calls them) exactly like our old-fashioned "love-in-a-mist," while the buds are decked out with just such mossy finery, and each blossom has a calyx fine and delicate as rarest lace. The flower is white, the stamens delicate blue, and the anthers brown. We brought home long trails of it, and every morning we have fresh and fragrant blossoms.

Shortly after we "met up" with this ravishing passiflora, drops of rain began to fall, and we reluctantly turned from Fox Hill, and very, very gradually traveled home.

There are times, even in Nassau, when patience gives way, and the next day we hunted up another steed, and set out again in the same direction; but this Nelly had an almost incurable dislike to turning corners, and it was our pleasure to turn a few, before we left the city behind us. At the fourth corner she rebelled, and became unmanageable to us, who are not up to the "tricks and manners" of an out-island pony. It seemed ages before a black man, sent by a white one, came to our rescue, and saved our "lives," as he solemnly assured us. There were plenty of people standing there on the street, but this one alone stirred, and he, undoubtedly, thought only of reward. Sadly we drove back to the stable, took in a driver, and went on half a mile to test Nelly's disposition. She seemed exceedingly vicious, and we were glad to see her retreating heels. We shall return to John, only stipulating for a whole harness, and a decent whip.

The Mother wants me to tell you that we had bread-fruit for dinner yesterday. It was round, and green and rough, like an Osage orange. We peeled, it and boiled it, and "broke" (mashed) it, as we were directed, like an Irish potato, which it tasted like, or at least more like that than anything else. It was pale yellow, dry, and so good that we shall always be glad to buy bread-fruit, but unluckily it is out of season. This only happened to be very much in advance or

else greatly in the rear, but that is just the way everything does here. We had chow-chow too, and that was a ridgy thing that looked somewhat like a green pepper, and tasted like a summer squash. Fried conchs also appeared upon our board, for we prefer them to the best clam of the north.

Thuke-dides is dead and done for. He clothed upon his bones with such rapidity that Lemuel was empowered to slay him, and I must say that in his grav(e)y we praised him more than when he lived and crew. Before his exit we invested in a demure little speckled hen, whose name is Corallena. *Eg(g)o fecit* is her morning song—and how can we spare these two-cent lays?

We have had the pleasure of seeing a shark in the harbor as we were returning from Silver Cay yesterday. We did not molest him.

There is a great, prickly vine here, with leaves like a rose, and we thought it was a mammoth sweet-brier at first, but it isn't; it is the *Guilandina Bonducella*, and its prickly seed-boxes hold the marbles that I have mentioned. These are gray, and white ones grow in long smooth pods, and bright red ones come from some unknown source. The shining little sea-beans with black eyes grow in large clusters on the licorice vine, which tangles itself in almost every thicket.

I wonder if you'll believe this that I'm going to write? The worse for you if you don't, for it's every whit true. On the 23d of March, as I came from the garden, where I had been looking vainly for buds on the mignonette-tree, and pulling up vincas, which are weeds here, along with ageratum, Beatrix spied a little

white lizard on my white dress sleeve. She brushed it off on the rug where I happened to stand, and we looked at it, wondering if it were frightened, when before our very eyes that thing turned speckled and brown ! We poked him off on a basket, and instantly he grew quite yellow ; then we transferred him to a white sill, and he turned pale ; we moved him to a green slat, and he turned dark again. There were four distinct changes in as many minutes !

Last Sunday we went over to a Methodist church in Grant's Town, that is familiarly termed "The Shouters." It is a small stone edifice, standing in a very stony yard, and what seems like a little bird-house, is where a faintly sounding bell is hung; it does not seem any louder of tone than a cow-bell or a tea-bell. The church is thatched with palmetto, after the fashion of the Congo negroes in Africa, and, from beneath, it is very pretty indeed. It is not more than ten feet to the eaves, but the steep, high roof makes it airy enough. There are six windows, 3x4 feet, upon either side, two doors in front and two in the rear, that always stand open during service. The windows are guiltless of glass, having only inside shutters. The desk and the railing about it are covered with Turkey red calico trimmed with cotton lace, and white cotton tassels adorn the pulpit cushion. We were met by a solemn, fat man,—the only fat negro we have observed,—who was clothed in a white shirt, white linen trousers, and a blue cloth sack-coat. He was barefooted, and had rings in his ears. He seated us on one of the benches that had a back, and gave his further attention to eight small darkies who

were swinging their feet from the two front benches. "What is your name?" he questioned. And every boy and girl answered "Mary." "What did your gawdfur and gawdmur promise, etc?" To which something was rejoined about "de pumps an' wani-ties o' de worl'." They repeated the answers after him very promptly, as if they had done it from time immemorial, and with far less expression than a parrot. After this dreary exercise he said, "Get down on yer knees now 'n' say de Lawd's prar—faces front." So then they repeated that after him in the same fashion. He pronounced a solemn benediction, and said, "Now get up. Go to your seats." The poor midgets obediently climbed up, and were diligently thumped by their elders if they showed any signs of sleepiness during the service that followed. The congregation straggled in at long intervals, till at the close twenty-five persons were present. The preacher was a tall, grave man, dressed in decent black. His cuffs were limpness personified, and the right one was buttonless, and dangled over his knuckles till he lost patience, and boldly turned it back over his coat-sleeve. He read his hymns straight through, then read each verse before it was sung, and this is the fashion in the colored churches. The fat man made a very earnest scriptural prayer, but I only recall his asking the Lord to "Trow all our sins behine dy glo'ious bock, in de sea of dy fo'getful." The sermon was a very disjointed talk based upon the text, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." He said that "Many don't believe that the Revelation of John is a part of the Bible; they don't believe in the Bible

at all, but others go into the thing in a different way, not in a questionin', doubtin' way, but just prayin' to be showed the truth, and *they* believe it." Then he went on to say how important it is to be in the spirit *especially* on the Lord's day. He lamented the lack of the spirit; said he remembered "a revival when the floor was covered with people mournin', but now there's no fire in the island. Folks come into church as cold as water, and go out like ice-blocks." He branched off on to the subject of heaven, and went on in this strain: "When I look into an astronomer, and read about the other worlds—for they do say the moon is inhabited, an' the larger stars—I don't know where *I* shall be. We don't know who lives in these worlds; we don't know even whether there are fallen bein's in 'em, but if we're in the church below, we shall have somethin' to do above. Therefore how important to be *in* the spirit, *especially* on the Lord's day." He said very guilelessly: "My father died w'en I was forty-four years old, 'n' I found he had been a restrainin' influence all my life. I always thought more o' him than any friend or relative I ever had. I don't know *why*." Those eight little mice didn't play, nor giggle, nor nudge each other, but one fell into a doze, and the preacher stopped and said, "You little boy, you behave yousel', sah." One about two years old was permitted to lie down on the bench, and kindly picked up as often as he lurched overboard.

After the sermon and hymn the elder called up a brother to make the closing prayer. He knelt down inside the railing, about four feet from where we were seated, and began in so low a tone that I couldn't

understand a word, but he gradually warmed up as he went on, fired no doubt by the responses, "Do, do!" "Oh, my!" "Yes, yes," or anything else that came handy. The peculiar intonation of the prayer was inimitable. The first thing audible to me was something about Paul and Silas, earthquakes, wrath, and thunder. The man was off his knees by that time, and swinging himself wildly about, sometimes stretching on tiptoe, sometimes leaning his long form far out over the railing. The fat brother behind us was shaking as if in an ague fit; a young woman was indulging in a fit of hysterical laughter; some were groaning as if in deadly agony, and right in all this hubbub came the high voice of the suppliant mentioning the "wite ladies," but we were so mixed in with "de wials of wraf," "de dead a-comin' forf," "terrors o' de las' judgmint," "Gawd no respecter o' persons, black or wite," that I haven't the least idea now whether we were delivered over to deserved punishment, or recommended to mercy. For one dreadful moment I thought they had all gone mad together, but suddenly

" Silence like a poultice came,  
To heal the blows of sound,"

22d.

Steamer day again, but here at 9:30 the steamer hasn't even been sighted. Don't you see how handy it is not to be running off to the post office till the mail really comes? What if you were all to troop in from the *Nassau*! You should have green turtle steak, and all the good things obtainable. You should see the oleanders, that are now in bloom



all through the city in masses of white, and cream, and pink, and rose, and dark red, and variegations. But really, I mustn't write any more about anything whatsoever, except that lizards will stand sleepily blinking at you just as long as you will whistle. Sometimes they fall into great rages with each other, and threaten, and chase, and puff out a great dew-lap that is probably designed for protective purposes.

Adieu now, every one of you, and love to you all from the four banished ones, "set free from daily contact with the Thing they loathed."

"Listen to this," broke out Bee: "'Groves of the oleander are very common, and—'" but the rest is not to the purpose. What do you think of that?" appealingly.

"We'll go and have a picnic in one of those groves some day," said Barbara. "What can the man mean? There are plenty of oleanders, it is true. But groves!"

"Perhaps there were groves when the book was written, and they've all been cut down," said the Mother.

"Yes, we know you are fond of the oleander for firewood, but I hardly think they (the groves, I mean) could have disappeared for that purpose," remarked Benita.

"But hear this," went on Beatrix, "about the Singing Tree or Woman's Tongue: 'In the winter season it has upon its branches a large number of light-colored, silvery, translucent pods—'"

"Translucent!" exclaimed Barbara.

"Let me go on. 'Its blossoms are beautiful but odorless—'"

"Odorless!" again interrupted Barbara. "Why, the ones that we found were as sweet as honey."

"Perhaps that was because it was out of season," said the Mother. "Perhaps when the whole tree is in blossom, the flowers are *not* fragrant."

There was a merry laugh over this singular reasoning, and the family agreed to wait for further developments.

"We shall see it in full bloom before we go, I think," announced Bee, looking up from the book, "and then we shall be able to say, also, whether the flowers are crescent-shaped, as this writer affirms. I shouldn't be at all surprised if they changed their shape when they blossom singly, for the ones we had were certainly round. It is strange how differently people look at things. It says here that 'the acacia flower is a little round yellow ball, about the size of a chestnut.' I *hope* he doesn't mean the French chestnut. I have never seen an acacia blossom larger than a hazel-nut, have you?"

"Why, no, and no one else has either. He's thinking of another plant."

"But he says," went on Bee, "that 'the yellow jessamine and a variety of flowering myrtles fill the air with their perpetual fragrance.' I thought we had scoured this country, and we have seen just one yellow jessamine, and that in a church-yard. As for the myrtles, I don't know what they are, if they grow here. I must look that matter up. Where is the mutable rose, I should like to know? He says it grows wild, but we have failed to find it, and *haven't* we been all over this island, Barbet?"

"You must remember, my child, that you have only been in the tropics a little while, and you know it is summer here all the year round. Many things may bloom in the summer that you never see in the winter, and this rose among them."

"Too bad," replied Bee. "But our author was here in the winter. Charles Kingsley says—wait, I'll just find the book, and read it to you: 'A lesson is never learned till it is learned over many times, and a spot is best understood by staying in it and mastering it.' I believe that is true, and I suspect that many writers of travels give information that they have gathered from every sort of evidence except that of their own eyes, and ears, and hands. It shall not be so with us if I can help it. Before our book is out, I want to look up all these disputed points, find them out for ourselves, and know by our own senses whether a flower is fragrant or otherwise, whether the flower of the alligator pear suggests the passion flower—"

"We know they don't, not in the least," interrupted Barbara, regardless of grammar. "What put that into your head?"

"A certain writer did, for I read it in an old book in the Library."

"All I have to say, then, is that he had never been nearer to an alligator pear than across seas," said Barbara. "You remember how they look, for we brought home a great handful the other day," turning to Benita.

"And I painted them," opening her sketch-book. "It seems to me that they look far more like elder-

blossoms, and not even like them. I am sorry that we shall go home before the fruit is 'full,' though perhaps we shouldn't like it, since the natives eat the pears with pepper and salt, it seems. Do you know that Kingsley calls them the 'midshipman's butter'?"

"Does he? What a suggestive name!" said Beatrix. "But let me bring forward a few more discrepancies before we close this session. I read in another old book that the yellow jessamine is dazzlingly conspicuous everywhere, and very fragrant. I can't think what he means unless he has seen the beautiful elder, which *does* grow everywhere, and you know that the elder is not fragrant. But let that go. I want to read some notes that I made yesterday," and she produced her small book, and snapped the rubber tape from the end.

"It pays for Trixy to go to that Library," slyly remarked Barbara.

"'Tuberose bloom before every cottage'—"

"Haven't seen but one," said Barbara, "and that was a half-starved specimen; besides, I inquired of Mrs. Don, and she said there were only a few on the island."

"'The rose is not quite equal in color, development, or fragrance to these of the North'—"

"How dares anybody say such a thing?" exclaimed the Mother, roused from her usual mildness, and touched upon a tender spot. "*Never* were such roses in the whole world as grow here! How can he say it?"

"He does," replied Beatrix, "but perhaps he had only been in the tropics a little while, and you know

it is summer here all the year round. Possibly only the poor ones bloomed while he was on the island."

"Quotations are—" began Barbara, but Bee went on:

"'The pendulous cactus hangs from the wall in queer little pipe-stem branches'—"

"Stove-pipe, I suppose he means," said Barbara sarcastically. "That is too much. Pipe-stem!"

"'The flower of the cocoanut is very beautiful'—"

"Beautiful! Why, so is a corn-flower, then," put in the artist.

"We mustn't be too severe till we have been here a whole year at a time," said the Mother. "Then we can speak with authority."

"But let me read you something pretty. It was written by a no less famous person than Columbus, and about the Bahamas: 'This country excels all others as far as the day excels the night in splendor: the natives love their neighbors as themselves; their conversation is the sweetest imaginable, and their faces are always smiling. So gentle and so affectionate are they that I swear that there is no better people in the world.'"

"That's all true," said the Mother, "and we know it."

"'An important industry,'" went on Beatrix, "'is the canning of pineapples.' I want to know why he doesn't speak of the canning of sapodillas, and guavas, and tamarinds, and cocoa-plums, which is done at the same establishment. Oh, by the way, I find that zapotas are mentioned by all these writers. I refer now to bits that I have gathered up from other sources as well as from the two books—"

"Cyclopedias and such?" said Barbara.

"Yes, zapotas mean sapodillas. I was so confused at first, and thought the writers were, too. I imagined they meant "mammee supporters" as the natives call them, till I consulted brother Noah—"

"How very disrespectful!" said Benita.

"And found that the sapodilla, delicious thing, has several names, and zapota is one of them."

"Bee ought to have a dictionary hung round her neck," said Barbara. "She thinks she can't stir without one,—even carries a little copy in her pocket."

"I should know next to nothing without one," retorted Bee.

"Why haven't we seen a jew-fish?" said Benita when Beatrix next read from her note-book that 'the jew-fish takes the same place here that the halibut does in the North.' Isn't that the fish that they catch by going down and placing the hook in his mouth? I never have seen one in market, though we have been there almost every day."

"Found only in the summer, I suppose," replied Bee. "I have a note here about the 'ceiba or silk cotton tree, whose anaconda-like roots are half out of the ground.' We must go and take another look at that specimen, which is the wonder of this island. I for one never thought of an anaconda in connection with the root."

"You are not very familiar with the anaconda, you know," said Barbara. "Perhaps your author was. But as for the roots being half out of the ground—well, they do stand up a 'good bit,' as the colored people say, but *half* out of the ground seems rather strong."

"I have only one more note," said Bee, and that is to the effect that many natives die of consumption, which I don't believe, and I have the authority of Dr. Andrew, who knows all about the people. But I do suppose we shall never break up this conference unless somebody starts, and we want to take a long walk, a tour of discovery, to-morrow."

## XII.

### AFRICAN VARIETIES.—VOODOOISM.

BARBARA'S next letter was as follows :

NASSAU, April 3, 1886.

MY DEAR GOOD PEOPLE: You will notice that two are dropped out of the dozen names with which I began, for our bargain was not a one-sided agreement by any means, and I can not longer project my "tropicals" into absolute silence. "Discipline must be maintained," and wholesome neglect is often a salutary measure.

As soon as Benita is dressed, she always takes her station in Bee's hammock to watch for the bread. We buy from two separate establishments; our white bread is made from "Minnesota roller-process flour" (have we not seen the barrels it came in?), and even the Mother pronounces it most excellent. We want brown bread on alternate days, but the colored mind cannot grasp a fact so complicated as this, and it is either delivered every morning, or else not at all; hence the necessity of vigilance to secure the coveted loaf. Dealers in fruits and vegetables also appear betimes, but they, too, are uncertain.

Sapodillas must be bought with discretion, and discretion I think I have attained; so I responded this morning to the voice of Poser Estelle, a 'cute little



thing who aspires to be a servant. She can "broke a cocoanut," I know, for she did it once on our doorstep, and the evidence of the deed will remain there when we are in other and worsen climes. She had Tantens with her—Tantens Dulfer Sonder, familiarly called Tanty (please remember that our a's are all ah's here), a funny little "half-cousin," and when I heard him humming a familiar ditty, I coaxed them into the veranda, ran for my lap-tablet, and "took 'em down," as Rogue Riderhood phrased it. All over the island we have heard these rhymes, and if two children are singing them, they are usually going through the familiar motions of "Bean porridge hot," just as we learned them. But here is the Nassau version of the immortal classic :

" John, John de babah,  
He went to shave his fadah,  
De razah slip and cut his lip—  
Hurrah for John de babah !  
Pease puddin' hot, pease puddin' cole,  
Pease puddin' in de pot nine days ole.  
Some likes it hot, some likes it cold  
Some likes it best w'en it's nine days old.  
I ast my muddah for fifty cent  
To see de elfint jump de fence.  
He jump so high dat he reach de sky,  
An' he nevah come back till Fourf 'n' July.  
Mayro, Mayro, come pay me of my money.  
Fifty cent cahneh o' de fence,  
Cha'lie has a niggah han't got no sense.  
Mary Mock dress in block,  
Silvah button behine her bock.  
High, low, 'tippy toe,  
Give a kick, 'n' way she go.

I love coffee, Billy love tea,  
I love a little boy, an' he love me.  
I tell mamma 'n' she come home,  
De boys wouldn't let dat gal alone,  
Pull her har, broke her comb,  
I tell mamma 'n' she come home.  
Miss Lightbun, Miss Lightbun, you' dea' lovah's dead,  
He send you a letteh to tu'n bock you' head.  
John, John de babah, etc."

Isn't that a lingo! When they are vexed, they often call out, "Oh, *you* han't got no sense, John, John, de babah!" We heard a woman scream out to another, "Oh, you har ain't been combed dese hundred years, John, John, de babah!"

The other day we were amused at a man in the street who was seemingly very angry. "You call me ole man, did you?" he said. "You got take dat bock. I no old man. I been to school. I got my teef." And he doubled up his fists and charged upon the offending party, who only smiled good-humoredly, as the pugilist worked his arms like a windmill, but did not touch his maligner. Then I heard him say, "I respeck you, I think highly o' you, but you insult me, sah." To my great amazement, he suddenly cooled down, the parties shook hands, and moved off arm in arm.

Tanty was greatly interested in my writing, and kept humming and singing softly in spite of Poser's womanly hushings. He suggested "Nango," and she started off on a queer melody with queerer words, which sounded to me like, "Oh yow, oh yow, de taffah," but the little market-woman saw that my processes, first of comprehension and then of transcription, con-

sumed considerable time, so she withdrew the light of her countenance, with the assurance that she would have more leisure on the morrow.

There are many native Africans here who distinctly remember the land of their birth. These speak their own language for the most part, and understand us but little better than we understand them. Nangoes, Congoes, Congars, or Nangobars, the Almanack calls them, but Nango and Egba are the only ones we have found. On Saturday morning there are twice as many venders in the market and all along the streets, and in the vacant spaces everywhere. The Egbas seem to be a smaller race than the others, and some of them look wonderfully old. Often their faces are scarred—for beauty?—and last week I saw one woman whose front teeth had each been filed to a point. Among these Egbas is one whom they call a queen, but if she merits a title, it should be Queen of Rags. When excited and angry, she is a tornado, but usually she begs as softly as the sucking dove. She pretends to great interest in us, and also to much piety. "I free to mon, missy," she said; "I not free to God. By Goddes powah you go. He say '*Come*,' by Goddes powah you come bock." All this might be intelligible if slowly spoken, but their words tumble out with fearful rapidity, and when one remarked, "Vetreevillyvimmy, missy," and I divined the sense of it to be "We are three widow women," I felt quite elated. "Lemuel," I said, "can you understand these women?" "No, missus; *nobody* cahn't unerstan' 'em but just they own selves. They 's *Afrikins*,"—with a look of such disdain on his

face that I strongly suspect that boy of pride of birth.

We found a benevolent-looking old Nango man in the market who was much pleased to talk with us. We asked him about his early life, and as nearly as I can remember it was thus: "'Paniard 'teal me fum t'ibe; two ships; one T'under; man-wah take we fum 'Paniard. Lan' we come fust, Jamaica; den take we Inagua; Inagua—we here." I made out from his story that they took ship at Aboukuti. He told us many Nango words, as *ahbaddo*, corn; *ahketta*, hat; *choketo*, handkerchief; *ahbahod*, spoon; *ahgeddi*, banana. Our researches in the Egba tongue gave us *masohbru*, banana; *umgazi*, spoon; *ahcoocoo*, chicken; *ahka*, finger.

Lemuel came in good season this morning, and took his mistress over the hills and far away. She returned laden with glorious red lilies—wild ones—that are just coming into flower everywhere. They are single and double. There are also dear little pink and white lilies that they call crocuses. An acquaintance had lured her in and fed her with papaws, and given her long branches of the lovely corallea vine, and told her how to preserve this, and how to find that, and who could make jellies, and how to treat native plants, etc. So she was obliged to stay at home this afternoon and paint up her perishable property. Not so we juniors. Like thrifty housewives, we had devoted part of our morning to the interesting business of preserving shaddocks, and putting them into three-cent candy-jars, and if they are not smashed in transit, and if the "customs" do not

gobble them up, and if they do not spoil, then you shall taste them, all sixty of you.

We set off early in the afternoon, going down Hospital Lane and into the Ballou Hill road. Now the wells of this island are a perpetual interest to me. Ours is a typical one. It seems to have been bored in the rock, and is about seven feet in diameter at the top, and perhaps five feet at the bottom, where there is a depression three feet across, and six or eight inches deep. Our water-drawer supplies us at evening and morning, when there is usually an ample supply, but often there isn't two gallons. They say that the wells rise and fall with the tide, and may be they do. There never was a place where a mind thirsting for information was so hardly used. Water is raised by a bucket and a rope, and, as the latter is drawn over the wooden well-curb, it naturally comes to pass that many years of such usage not only wear out the ropes, but also cut deep notches in the wooden curb. In town, there are pulleys, over which the rope may pass, but the average negro does not affect them, and his favorite "pitcher" is a two-quart pail. I presume the wells have been dug at public expense in the suburbs, for they occur only at intervals, and are by the roadside. I look into them always, to satisfy my curiosity. There is seldom much depth of water, but there is usually a sad accumulation of *débris*, and very, very often I trace the lineaments of frog and tadpole. My first well this afternoon had a curb with half a dozen grooves worn into its sides, and some of them were two inches deep. I asked the convenient boy who stood near

what the small chain was there for. "Was been bucket dere, missus," and when I inquired where the bucket was, he replied, "People done stole de bucket, missus."

We took the lanes to-day instead of the roads, and that means hard walking. The stones have not been broken at all, and look as if they had been run through some sort of a coarse mill, and then dumped down helter-skelter. No wonder that a woman's shoes will only last a week upon such rough ways. Many of the little cabins we saw to-day had but one small room; others had two or perhaps three very tiny ones, but you must remember that there are no stores of food to keep, cooking and living are out-of-door affairs, and the house is only a dormitory. Always there are white curtains before the sashless windows, and usually a white-covered bed with lace-ruffled pillow-cases. The Sunday wardrobes are doubtless kept in the bright blue wooden chests, that are seen in every dwelling. There are just as many small, narrow stands as the room will hold, and on them is crowded a mixture of cheap glass and china, while gay pictures are tacked on the unplastered walls. The yards are neat, and I sometimes think these people are too poor to have any litter. Many washings were out to-day, not on lines, but on the walls, on the bananas, and orange-trees. I saw my own pet gingham on a rose-tree, for it is a favorite way of the laundresses to dry all starched skirts upon some bush near their size, till sometimes the yard seems full of decapitated women. A road-

side fence would not answer to dry clothes on in many countries, but keep in mind that we are practically dustless, and the Nassau urchin is a stranger to the mud-pie, perforce. All these cabins were among tall trees, so that looking down from Fort Fincastle or Fort Charlotte, one can not see a roof. There stands the whole shining host of trees that make the letters N. P. mean Negroes' Paradise as well as New Providence.

I think often of our fruits. How evanescent is the cherry, and how uncertain ! How far too short is the season of the strawberry ! How soon does the pear mellow and vanish ! Nothing but the cruel red currant has much time allowed it, and the useful apple, which I would not overlook. Now here, we had the sapodilla on our arrival, and it continues with unabated zeal, for tiny ones are still growing, and yesterday I saw the flowers that betoken another crop. Gooseberries are "full," and they are ribbed like a melon : they taste like ours, only they are sweeter. Cherries grow on bushes ; each one has three pits and there are three separate crops in a year. Peppers grow on trees, and are the very spirit of fire. Usually there is some sort of roof over the cooking-places of these cabins ; sometimes a rude arch is built of stones, and here and there we see a tall stone oven all by itself, but the old-fashioned bake-kettle is the stand-by. A few sticks of wood suffice to boil the grits, or fry the fish, or cook the soup, which I think must be composed of okra, or gumbo as they call it, with onions and shallots, tomatoes, peppers, and pot-herbs. As we wandered along,

we saw a man weaving fannas, which are round, shallow baskets to carry upon the head; these were made of bay grass and silver-top, which is a kind of palmetto, with a row of the umber-hued braziletto to ornament the top. We ordered some small ones, which would be done "on a Chuesday, please Gawd." Farther on, three tiny girls rushed out of a yard, and one of them began to march silently by my side, taking long steps in a very comical imitation of mine. Suddenly she cast up her eyes at Beatrix, gave one terrified shriek, and ran back to her companions. We coaxed her a little to find out the reason of so unusual a proceeding, and she frankly confessed that she "was scared of de w'ite lady." Further solicitation elicited the fact that it was the handle of Bee's sun-umbrella that had struck terror to her heart. We showed her how harmless it was, and with an insinuating smile she said, "Please let me take you' brelly, lady." It was droll enough to see the profound satisfaction of the black atom, and the airs and graces she instantly assumed. She gravely offered her small hand at parting, and remarked to Beatrix, as if to atone for any injured feeling, "You good lady, you my people. My people don' tieve no mo'."

In a yard near by was an interesting group of juveniles in charge of Sëera Clementina Victoria Bode, a smiling, interesting girl of twelve, who wore a large wreath of full-blown roses on her head, and offered us "verben-yas." Ernest Gustus Dean, an eight-year-old youth in the usual airy costume of the suburbs, had an old tin tied around his neck, and with two sticks he was executing some creditable drum-



ming. Mary Anna Rebecca Jane Ivans, Emma Evelyn Lee, and Lily Euterpe Florence marched along after him with banners that were stained and tattered. But the gem of this collection was Tryphus Sawyer, a little fellow of five, who wore a yellow calico waist over his blue checked cotton shirt. He had also a black carpet rag about his waist, and over his shiny black face he had tied a piece of limsy black crinoline. Tryphus danced as only Tryphus can, and the unique part of his performance was in keeping his feet firmly on the ground, and still expressing rhythmic grace by the movements of his agile little body, while all the time little gleams of conscious pride twinkled in his eyes.

Next we hunted up Ellen Darkholm, in the vain hope of finding another ripe bread-fruit upon her tree. Ellen was not working in the field as usual this evening, but was looking after a small "grandboy" whose mother had gone into town, and being at home was indulging in a common *negligé* costume. Her red calico dress was tied around her waist by its sleeves. A scrap of coarse pale blue flannel waist was visible beneath her white cotton upper garment. Ellen is a Nango, a fine tall woman, the mother of twelve children, who are nearly all parents themselves. She is stately, with the bearing of a Juno. Her face is scarred on cheeks and forehead, and her shoulders have long symmetrical seams that converge between her shoulder-blades. She does not understand us very well, but whatever we say, she throws her head back and laughs, till sometimes the tears run down her cheeks.

Next we met a funeral, and a blacker sight I never beheld in all my life. We made some inquiry, and the garrulous old sexton asked if we didn't want to see "the old man's stone." Of course we did, and so he piloted us through the rocky yard to see the stone of "Poppy Rumer," which had but lately arrived from England, although the popular Baptist preacher had been dead two years. "He good man," prattled our guide, "he good man, Poppy Rumer, 'n' stood in gospel eighty-five years. Had pain in knees or he be 'live now; all well but knees, 'n' stood in gospel eighty-five year. But grave ought been so 'n' so," he said, indicating with his cane a greater breadth and less length, "fa he shawt man, Poppy Rumer, 'n' stood in gospel eighty-five year." The old man allowed us to gather some lovely squill lilies, and clusters of the flaming Barbadoes Pride, then we walked on to admire a magnificent stephanotis in a cabin yard, and to pay our respects to a Lamarque that has had three thousand roses this very winter.

Next we were importuned by Olivia Higgs, a collector of a church, who had a card with rows of dots on it, to be punched with a pin for every cent given. Said Olivia profusely thanked us for our small alms, and asked us to come to her church, where she assured us "we sing so pritty."

Then we were struck dumb with wonder at finding the *Clerodendron Balfourii* growing wild in the greatest profusion. Some of you may remember that we had it from Mobile under the name of Cologne Plant, and that it bloomed in the greenhouse last winter—white blossoms like tiny double roses growing in a

large head, with many garnet sepals and bracts, and deliciously fragrant. A girl came out and helped us gather them, and added to this "Spanish jasmine," as she called it, clusters of lovely roses, and a spike of lovelier pink Lagerstrœmia, or crape myrtle. Query, How did she pick up the botanical name? She is a school-mistress from the island of Inagua, which is down near Cuba. She teaches "books in the morning and fancy work in the evening." For the former class she has two cents a week and for the latter twenty-five cents. Her evening pupils were crocheting thick baby-sacks and comforters!

On our way home we met two girls with great bundles of the Bona Nox vine on their heads, taking them home to "creatures," that is to say, goats. Bona Nox is the glorious "moon flower" that we grew so successfully in a warm corner one summer, but here its delicate perfume rises from every thicket after six o'clock.

Then we met a boy with two birds caged in a rough box. He asked a check apiece. He said they were cock-robins, that they lived in sapodilla-trees, and sang all day; and so said our carpenter as we passed by. We bought one, and immediately named him Check. Bee brought him home in her hand, and let him loose in a room that I think I forgot to mention. It was referred to by our landlord as a bath-room, but there are no bathing facilities except four walls. There Check Robin abides, a lively black and white fellow, with orange and brown feathers under his chin. He is really a Banana, or Sapodilla bird.

Benita's contribution came next in order;

On Good Friday, a day that is here kept with such impressiveness that you might think it the very first anniversary of the Crucifixion, I gave my retainer a Testament, his own being a dilapidated specimen. In this I wrote "Lemuel Mill," the name by which "Bankey" had introduced him. He made a doubtful demurrer on reading the inscription.

"Yes, mum ; but dat's not my name, mum."

"Not your name, Lemuel ? What is it, then ?"

"My name Lemuel Camplejohn."

Here was a revelation after all these months ! I had called him several times by this name, and Lemuel evidently humored my whim, whatever his natural objections.

"But how came Bankey to call you 'Mill,' Lemuel ?"

"Dat a fun name, mum. See, mum ? Dey call a boy Jock w'en he was christen John. Just like dat, mum ; it's for fun."

This explanation seemed hardly adequate, and I was left to discover by another chance that Mill was a family name. In the "evening," as they say here, I went off to paint on a lovely flat shell, which I had unearthed from a curiosity shop at a ridiculously small price, to a point near St. Matthew's Church, and on the way I questioned Lemuel about the three-hours' service held that morning. He had not been present, it seemed, nor had I, though a woman had stopped in the street before seven o'clock that morning, to rebuke me for buying sapodillas. Poor little Poser, who sold them, came in for a share of the fiery denunciation,— "God will punish you," she called out

to us, and though barefoot and ragged, she had an air of virtuous authority,—“God will punish you for breaking his commandments. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and—”

“We have not labored six days yet. This is only Friday,” I objected. But she went on unheeding, and when I had completed my purchase and retired behind the jalousies, she was still going on with her denunciations. I told Lemuel this, but no smile came to his grave countenance.

“Do you think it the same as Sunday, too?”

“Yes, mum,” he replied. “I think it greater day dan Sunday, because our Lord was crucified to-day.”

“Why did you not go to church, then?”

“Well, mum, I did start to go, but I met up wid fifty boys playing ball, and I stopped till it was too late.”

“Then you do not live up to your principles, Lemuel.”

“No, mum; dere’s *millions* dat don’t, mum.”

This was undeniable, and I dropped the subject.

On a street-corner we encountered a woman of singular aspect, with a bandage covering the middle of her face. She appeared to be in such a state of frenzy that I had my chariot brought to a stand-still, some paces off. She was declaiming in loud tones to the passers-by, on some wrong done to her by a smaller and younger woman, who never said a word, but was detained in a forcible manner by her persecutor, whenever she tried to slip away. Every person who passed had to hear the story repeated, and the longer she dwelt upon it, the more incensed did the

virago become. "Dis tief! Dis bahd woman!" she cried. "Listen to me. She watch my house. She seed I go out. She know my lil chilun lone. Yes, missis. Boss, you hears me? She see my bahsket. She tu'n up the covah. All my cakes! My candy! My cocoanuts! My benny! She trow dem bout. She open my box. She take out my coppahs,—two, six, eight coppahs! She go out and leave my bahsket open,—my bahsket, my *bahsket*! You woman, give me back my coppahs,—my eight coppahs!" Here she fell upon the unfortunate girl tooth and nail, threw her hat on the ground, tore off her shawl, grasped the neck of her dress, and shook her violently. The bystanders stood around, mildly interested. None of them said a word. The victim calmly picked up her shawl and hat, and followed the crowd to the next corner, where I heard her accuser begin the whole scene over again. Such are the diversions of this simple people.

"What ails her, Lemuel?" I asked.

Lemuel shrugged his shoulders. "She *talk* too much, mum."

"But what is the matter with her face?"

"Los' her nose, mum."

"Was it cancer or an accident?"

"No, mum; poison, mum. It was put upon her, mum."

"Put upon her? How?"

"Somebody had a spite against her, mum. Dat's de way dey does here, mum."

"*How* do they do, Lemuel? I don't understand. Throw vitriol or some such thing, do you mean?"

"No, mum ; it's dis way, mum. Dey has something dey brings from Africa, an' dey trows it down before your mudder an' dey say some paltry thing. Den wen you step over it, you spoiled. Like dis, mum. A man an' a woman was talkin' right here in Bay Street, like as it were a husband an' wife, an' dis man tell her 'Go home,' 'an' she tell him go hisself, an' before he get so far—see, mum, like as it were from here to St. Matthew's, mum—he break his leg. An' so he did, mum."

"Did a carriage run over him, Lemuel, or what?"

"No, mum ; he just break his leg."

"What, on this smooth road ? I cannot believe that, Lemuel."

"All right, missus," replied that imperturbable youth, as implying that it didn't matter much what I believed.

"And I know a ship dat sail, mum, wen a woman tell dem dey all be drowned. She beg 'em, mum, and wen dey would go, she broke an egg into the sea and say a curse, mum."

"What kind of an egg, Lemuel ?"

"Just an egg, mum."

"What, a common egg ? What good could a common egg do, Lemuel ? Wasn't it a flamingo's egg ?" We had been talking of these birds this morning, and Lemuel had told me that he had seen a whole flock of them on Hog Island.

"It isn't de *egg*, mum. *Any* egg would do. De egg don't make no differ."

"What did she break it for, then ?"

"Dat is de way dey does it, missus,—just breaks de

egg and says some paltry stuff. Forty or fifty men, dey was all drowned, mum."

Again I expressed my disbelief in any such spell.

"All right, mum; but I can show you de tomb-stone."

I supposed this to be the monument erected near Fort Charlotte, to the sailors lost in trying to rescue a ship's crew near the island.

"Does it say anything about the curse?"

"No, mum; but dat is what it mean. I *knows* it, mum; and you can ask Aunt Jamaica or Aunt Peace, or any of dose people you think so much of. Dey all tell you so. If I was going to New York, and dey tell me such a thing, mum, I not go. I *never* go," continued Lemuel, growing emphatic in his earnestness. "I'd be shore to be drowned. I go down to de steamer once, mum, and de steward send me to get some grub, and wen I buy my green things of Aunt Jamaica, a wite man tell me to go out and stop de rain, and I tell him, mum," proceeded the serious youth, "dat I do any other erran', but I 'fraid to use such language. Then he go out hissself, missus, an' look up to de blue sky, mum, an' he say, 'You stop rainin' or I go up an' *make* you stop.'" Lemuel's eyes dilated with awe as he came to an abrupt pause.

"Well, Lemuel, did the lightning strike him? What happened?"

"Nothin', mum; but Aunt Jamaica she talk good to him."

I could readily believe this, but the story seemed to lack point.



"Do you know any one that was really struck with the Evil Eye, Lemuel?"

"Oh yes, mum! Dat man you see by your house walkin' on his knees, and dat man what bend over so, dey both spoiled. Dere's great lot people spoiled on this island, mum."

"But what a dreadful state of things, Lemuel!"

"It is so, mum."

"Should you think God would give such power to wicked people?"

"Yes, mum; he does it for our sins, mum."

"But, Lemuel, you ought not to believe what people say; it is not true unless the Bible says so. If you fear God, you need not fear wicked men."

Lemuel was prepared for this; he held his ground steadily.

"De New Testament, dat book you give me, mum, it *tell* me to mind such things; it tell me I must believe dem, mum."

"Where, Lemuel?" I asked, in great surprise.  
"Can you show it to me?"

"All right, mum. It is, mum."

So to-day he brought his New Testament, with his finger in the place, and began at once to read to me from the third chapter of John, "Jesus answered and said unto him—" He read on for two verses, and coming to the twelfth, glanced triumphantly at me as he ended, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

"See, mum? Jesus say if I not believe de eart'ly things I hear, den I not believe de things he tell me

about heaven. I bound to believe, mum. I 'bleeged to, mum."

Astounded at this novel interpretation, I endeavored to explain the passage according to the modern commentaries, but my words had not the slightest effect on Lemuel. He held his opinions modestly, but firmly.

"All right, mum, but I know it, mum."

I wanted to go down to Delancey's Town to see the curse taken off a man and a blessing put on, as I was informed that ceremony was then taking place, but it was too far, and I went home to ponder on the strange things I had heard.

"Poor, ignorant creatures," sighed the mother.

"I heard a great outcry this morning," said Beatrix. "Mrs. Sanborn's cook was scolding her child outrageously, for meddling with some corn on the doorstep. Lemuel said, 'Somebody put *foo-foo* on her, mum, an' you hos to do some trick to take it off'n her. If de chile 'sturb de corn, she hos to pay de cunjur-woman to do some other trick, an' it make her ongry, mum.' These negroes are full of all manner of superstition—only one remove from heathenism."

## XIV.

THE BISHOP.—RAMBLES.—INSCRIPTIONS.—FRUITS.

BARBARA'S journal-letter came first at the next session:

April 3.

Last month we had a first-class excitement. It seems that a newly appointed Bishop was expected to arrive from England on the 22d, and great preparations were going on. The *Cienfuegos* from Cuba was ahead, and brought news that the Bishop was drowned. We were down at the landing when the *Nassau* came in, with the tidings, that went through the crowd like wildfire. We turned and walked home, but the report rushed ahead of us, and by the time we reached our door we were supplied with full particulars. "He was on ship named *Oregon*," said Lemuel, "'n' he jes gone out in a row-boat for 'n' evenin's pleasure, jes' like you do, mum, 'n' a schooner struck him off Fire Island." When we considered that the news came by cable *via* Cuba, we doubted the details, to say the least.

And early next morning the cathedral bell rang for the service the Bishop had planned to have immediately upon his landing, for the *Santiago* was in, and the bishop safe and sound, in spite of having been on the *Oregon*. It is said that he was separated from his

friends during the transfer to the *Fulda*, and so the rumor of loss originated. Next morning everybody was happy and smiling, while before all seemed sunk in fathomless depths of woe. Death terrifies a negro, and no doubt the Bishop seemed very little lower to them than their good Queen.

Aunt Peace said, "O missy, you got go on ocean? When I hear like dis, my mine all c'fusion, my heart turn to water. *Stay on lan', missy.*" Aunt Jamaica was so radiant over the "good arrivance o' de Bishop" that she forgot to bewail her rheumatism as usual; "An' I say," she went on in her deliberate, emphatic way, "I don' *believe* he de onlies' one drown. If he *be*, den I say it was de Lawd's will."

This afternoon we have been down to the shore. Now would you not naturally suppose that the rocky coast of a coral island would be white? I'm sure I expected to see snowy ledges as white as the foam, but instead of that, the rock is black. There is no suggestion of coral to the eye; it is more like a petrified black sponge. There are drifts of fine sand for at least a quarter of a mile along the broad shore, and there we find shells of many kinds,—great conchs, whelks, Noah's arks, knee-pans, and dozens of others. There are curious wire sponges, dead sea-fans and sea-feathers, sea-urchins and sea-biscuits. We find various corals, too, that have been washed ashore, but the delicate edges are worn by their tossings. The pools are not as full of life and beauty as those we know from Nahant northward; there are almost no algæ, but there is a curious emerald anemone, or something similar, that grows in communities within

our easy reach ; there are plenty of lively little "fidlers" and a very great plenty of hermits ; there are "crushed strawberry" urchins, and round black urchins, with spines nearly two inches long ; and urchins that have glowing scarlet shells under their black armor ; and another kind burrow in the rocks, and are seen only at low tides, along with fat anemones ; and in the sandy bottoms of the pools we see the slender arms of a certain starfish that would rather lose every member that he can drop off, than to be captured alive ; and there are queer moss-biscuits that we find occasionally. So these abundant riches being at hand, we set up an aquarium, which is not yet a success, because we have not secured the vegetable life that is needed to purify the water. We often sit for a whole evening and watch the capers of our captives.

This afternoon Beatrix called my attention to a curious ruffly weed in a pool, when to our amazement it calmly and slowly moved off. It had several shapes and many colors ; a double ruffle stood up on its back, and it had a number of little round ventilators on its upper surface ; it was mostly green and brown, but it also had big black rings. We thought of the frog and the hippopotamus, the snail and the duck-bill. It was long, it was narrow, it was round—or it was triangular,—and sometimes it seemed to be on the point of laying itself open and giving us a full view of its interior. "Boy," I said to the nearest urchin, "do you know what this thing is?" "Scuttle, mum," he said, with his eyes nearly popping out of his head with fright. "It's dang'ous, mum." "Is it?" I asked. "What can it do?" "Suck ev'ry drop you

blood, mum." "I don't think that little thing can hurt me, do you?" "Yes, mum; race you off de rocks, mum." I presume it was a sea-slug that he confused with an unpleasant cuttle-fish sometimes seen in the harbor. But lest we should come to grief, he hovered at a respectful distance, and occasionally ventured to warn us, when he thought we were running into danger. The surf was rolling grandly over the western end of Hog Island, thundering like a cascade, and, farther east, its innumerable fountains were tossing up great columns of milky foam.

When we came home, we walked up a new street to look at some royal palms. We had exasperating glimpses of a lovely garden, and I said in my firmest tones, "If people *will* build such barbarous walls, I shall go and peek in at every identical gate, and if you are going to feel disgraced by me, then you'll have to leave me. I've stood this thing and been proper, just long enough." Bee's propriety was also worn threadbare, so we stood and commented upon the wonders, when, like the barriers in fairy tales, open flew the gates, and the owner of the garden invited us to enter, and showed us his twenty-six kinds of fruit, rare flowers, native orchids, ferns, and cacti. It was not till we had thanked him for his kindness, and for the hearty invitation to go in whenever we liked, and were on our way home, that we put two and two together, and bethought ourselves that it was the rector of the Cathedral, who had been so courteous. He had called in our absence, and promised to give Benita an assortment of lily bulbs.

On Lady-day Morning, we were standing in the

veranda after an early walk, when we became aware of a quiet gathering of people in our street. I don't think it was more than ten minutes, before there was a crowd standing in expectant attitude; then came the sound of music, and a forward movement of men, women, and children marching down the street. After the band, came a society with gay banners, the "ladies" wearing a regalia of garnet velvet trimmed with pink silk fringe, or yellow bullion fringe. The men wore a black and white regalia, and sometimes there were embellishments of gilt paper. At the rear of the procession, and where the interest appeared to center, was a carriage holding four people. The "lady" upon the front seat leaned back at an angle of 45°; a white straw turban, trimmed with ostrich plumes, tipped jauntily back upon her head, and a white dress trimmed with gilt paper, conspired to make an imposing appearance. But her friend in the rear was even more gorgeous, for she wore a bonnet gotten up like a crown, and profusely adorned with huge gilt beads; she had a long white veil, and when she went up the steps of the Cathedral leaning on the arm of her sable escort, her white alpaca dress trailed a whole yard after. This was too much for us to bear quietly, so we worked our way through the crowd, asking questions as we went.

"What is this? Who is it marching?"

"A s'iety, missus."

"What's the society for?"

"Oh, if you b'longs to it, missus, you's followed to your grave an' respected."

"Who was the woman in the carriage?"

"Oh, dat's de Queen, mum ; name Lizbuth."

"She nev' mahch foah," volunteered another.

"What do they call this procession?"

"It de Queen March, missus."

So in we went with the motley crowd that only idlest curiosity had drawn together,—nurse-girls with their charges, women from the market, loafers from the streets, idlers from everywhere, who only wanted to see the show, and so passed in as the rector gave downright good advice to the "Society," exhorting them to neatness, sobriety, economy, and forethought. Then they marched grandly out and away, and in five minutes there was no trace left of the curious crowd that had filled the street.

We find that there are many "Friendly Societies," as they are called, and doubtless they are a benefit to these sadly improvident blacks. The little pomp and circumstance attending, are as honey to their taste, for there's very little difference in people the wide world over. They are only children, but we have discovered that N. P. may also mean Northerners' Paradise, and we, too, are growing young and "exceeding frivolous." So Benita gravely says when we are more than usually gay.

"Our book will be a remarkable one," broke in Beatrix, "and as we have managed it, I don't see that we need to be held responsible for anything in it. If there are errors, we can put the blame on Lemuel, or somebody akin to him. And then, really, it is no worse for *us* to make mistakes than for others. I have been reading an old magazine article upon



this island, and the author says that the soursop is a great, green fruit, like a bloated cucumber, and that the flesh is like cotton soaked in vinegar."

"What is a bloated cucumber?" asked the Mother. "I never heard of such a thing. How could a cucumber be bloated?"

"Think of describing our delicious, favorite fruit in such terms," said the artist.

"Try to describe it yourself," said Barbara.

"Why, it's a great green fruit, with thorns all over it."

"Not thorns," objected the Mother, "but spines."

"Not spines," said Barbara, "but—say prickles with the points cut off," ended she ignominiously.

"You see, that is just the trouble. One can't describe the fruits here to those who have never been in the tropics, and perhaps it is near the truth as the author could come, to say 'bloated cucumber.' But I don't like it," Benita protested. "It seems a libel on the soursop."

"I know how *I* can describe a soursop," spoke up Beatrix. "I have begun a clear and lengthy description already, with my box of crayons, only I didn't have a good specimen yesterday, and I want to try again when we buy another."

"We have one now," said the Mother. "Lemuel brought it to-night; or, rather, he brought the *girl* who brought the soursop."

"Oh, where is it?" asked impatient Beatrix.

"*Why* must you see it now?" said Barbara, who hated to be interrupted. "Can't you take it on trust until morning, when you can use it?"

"I supposed I might just look at it," sighed Beatrix, "but of course I can wait," settling back in the steamer-chair with the air of a martyr. "After all, the literary work is of the first importance, and I don't mean *ever* to let anything distract me. By the way, or in the way, of our—our—work, I copied some queer inscriptions, and I think they are interesting. Let me read you two or three, from the Potter's Field where the cathedral people bury their dead :

' Father and mother, not on this stone, but on the  
hearts of your children, are engraved your love  
and your virtue.'

' Now I lay her down to sleep,'  
While me and her two dear sons return home to weep.'

"And I actually found one stone that had 'R. i. p.' on it," said Bee. "I read of that inscription years ago, but I never believed it had been used anywhere except in the newspapers. There was another that read,

' Just born, baptized, and gone.'

"And this. I will only read the last part ; it is to the memory of 'a native of Bermuda.'

' This stone is dedicated by his  
afflicted widow  
in commemoration of those social duties  
he so distinguishingly performed  
of husband, father, and friend.' "

"Does it seem," said Benita, "as if we could ever go back and be just common people again?"

"What's the *use* of going back?" said Bee. "It

isn't interesting, and the climate we live in is *just unbearable*."

"But would you like to settle down on this island and lose your interest in the world? never care whether you did anything for anybody?" asked the Mother.

"I suppose we oughtn't to live just for our own enjoyment, but we'll stay as long as we can, and a good freezing will soon take the satisfaction out of us," answered Benita.

"I foresee," complained Beatrix, "that I am to have the very hardest and most disagreeable part of our literary sojourning here. Barb has her letters to write, and that anybody can do—"

"Why don't you, then, my dear?"

"And Benita has 'Lemuel and the schools and a few little things she has seen in the street,'" went on Bee, dropping unconsciously into the phrase over which they had laughed on the first evening; "but I—I shall have nothing except the hard work of putting your furnishings together, and when they won't join, I've got to piece them out with bits of my own. I'm afraid I'm not adapted. I never could bear to do patchwork when I was young and tender, and this isn't play, now, let me tell you. I've been trying it by spells all this week. I took my paper and pencil, and sat down regularly to work. I fancied how we would begin; how Barbara would read her letters, and Bee her Lemuel, and the Mother would make remarks. I hurried on, in my fancy, through chapter after chapter, and I must say it became rather bewildering as we reached the end. I thought how I could say

'answered' sometimes and 'replied' some other times, and 'said' and 'spoke,' and a few wheel-and-ratchet words of like import ; but it was more than I could do to keep on in my fancy with anything original after the first few chapters. That kind of thing can't be kept up forever. And what I want to know is, how do authors carry on conversations through a whole book without being tiresome? What do they do when the 'saids' and 'answereds' and 'replieds' give out?"

"That is your business," remarked Barbara unfeelingly. "My part was to write the letters."

"And mine, Lemuel and the schools," added Benita.

"I know just how it will be," wailed Beatrix. "I shall go on swimmingly for fifty pages or so, and, after that, the people who read the book will be in the same state of mind that our crazy neighbor was when he sat down to read the dictionary!"

"And what *was* his state of mind?" queried Barbara.

"Why, crazy, of course."

"Did it never occur to you," remarked Benita, "that a professional reader and only a *possible* publisher stand between you and the public?"

"Yes, it *does* occur. It occurs too often."

"Then give it up, child. It won't pay," said the mother.

"No, *ma'am*. I refuse to lower my colors at present," replied Beatrix firmly.

## CHAPTER XV.

TO THE SEA GARDENS.—HISTORY GLIMPSES.—MORE  
FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

“**I**S this the sixth letter, or the seventh?” asked Beatrix.

“We don’t care which it is,” said the Mother. “Don’t waste time over the number. I am anxious to know what Barbara has written about Fox Hill. I don’t see how you could *describe* it, and I am very much afraid you haven’t done full justice to the dancing.”

“Why, there wasn’t any, you know,” said Beatrix.

“Well, justice to the dancing that would have been,” explained the Mother.

Barbara laughed at this, and Benita said she didn’t see how they could have been so foolish as to come home without having a dance.

“Attention ! called out Beatrix.

NORTHERNERS’ PARADISE, April 10.

No, we don’t know that we shall ever want to go away, but if we can screw our courage to the sticking place, we shall leave on the 17th of next month. We have engaged our staterooms for that date, but you mustn’t be surprised if the superior attractions of Nassau overcome us.

I must tell you that we had waited a long time for the best possible wind and weather, to make the trip to the Sea Gardens some miles away. Our seniors had seriously demurred to sails, but we overcame their scruples, had Benita's chair taken aboard the pretty Molly Bawn, and away we sped over the blue waters, with Captain Major and one man for crew, *plus* Lemuel, who had squeezed his feet into a very small pair of boots, and was wearing the tallest and most remarkable white wool hat that my eyes ever beheld. How we did spin! Away past Little Potter's Cay, Hog Island, and Athol Island, till we were at the long-looked-for spot. The sails were lowered, the anchor dropped, and we clambered over the Molly's side into a rowboat,—a difficult operation, for the tide was running in, the Molly bobbed up and down, and the rowboat acted rather contrary; but we didn't mind the thorough spattering in the least, as we wandered in the Gardens. How? Our broad-bottomed craft had panes of glass set in its floor, and our men paddled slowly over the clear water, while we looked our fill at the under-world. We saw branching coral, sponges of curious forms, tall purple sea-fans and feathers waving gently to and fro, yellow sea-fans also in motion, fat brown cucumbers lying in lazy content, gorgeous angel-fish, and rainbow-fish, and blue porgies; we saw—oh, it would be far easier to tell you what we didn't see, that was graceful, and enchanting, and wonderful. We ne'er shall look upon the like again, and because we insisted, the two others took our places, which they were helped to do quite easily, and they had their round of paddling and

gazing. You should have seen us fly home, past the Soldiers' Barracks and the Lighthouse, then back again to land, to see in our dreams the same fair sight again.

Isn't it strange that the black people are really more ambitious than the whites, who strike us as being the most phlegmatic, primmest, self-satisfied people created. They are wholly without interest in the rest of the world, too much like "Lo, the poor Indian," perhaps exactly like him, since it may justly be said of the average native "To be, contents his natural desire." And this is how said native lives. Everybody has a cook, who receives each night a sum of money for the morrow's needs, and returns home to her kindred. In the early morning she goes to market and grocery and buys *everything* for the day, and carries her purchases away on her head. And do let me tell you, lest I forget it, that to test a watermelon, she puts it on her head, and gives it a sudden pull, exactly as if she were trying to compress her skull-cap. She serves her breakfast at about nine o'clock, and dinner at three or four; then, leaving the tea-kettle on, she goes home, and commonly with quite a supply of perquisites, I fancy. Her wages are \$2.78 per month. There is usually a housemaid, also, who prepares tea at seven. A scrubber comes at stated periods, and washing is done out of the house. I think it would take five of these servants to do the work of one northern domestic.

"If a cook doesn't suit, or doesn't buy economically, why, dismiss her and get another," said one house-mother, "there are cooks in plenty"; and we smile as

we think of other lands where the change of servants is looked upon as an evil that is both inevitable and awful.

The history of the island is quite fascinating, as it has been the prey of Spanish, French, and pirates in turn. All the gentle people of whom Columbus wrote, perished miserable slaves in the mines of Spain. Of the pirates, one Black Beard is held in remembrance as a villain deeper dyed in crime than mind can imagine; but he and all his followers were conquered, and for years the Bahamians lived upon the misfortunes of others, if we may believe the stories told of the wreckers. From 1673 the English have been in nominal possession, as this island, with others, was then granted by Charles II. to certain proprietary lords, and governors were decorously appointed to rule over the lands. But fancy the total lack of reverence in the inhabitants, when I tell you that one of these rulers was seized and sent to Jamaica, and it is written down on the pages of history that one of his successors was accorded a still warmer reception—was roasted, in fact. And then we read that in 1704 a new governor was sent out to the settlement, which numbered a thousand souls, but when he arrived, he found the place totally uninhabited, so that, after encamping in the woods as long as he thought proper here, turned to his native land. Then it was that Black Beard and his men let loose their evil passions, and, if we may believe the records, only Pandemonium itself could rival the scenes of violence and bloodshed then witnessed on this lovely isle. Somewhere in the 1780's, a force of seven



hundred Spanish regular troops were routed by a band of fifty men under an enterprising young officer, who displayed consummate ingenuity and address in attacking and conquering a foe so superior in numbers.

And did you know that during our Civil War this little Nassau was on the crest of the wave? It made the handiest possible place, you see, for blockade runners to slip in and shift cargoes. No less than 397 entries from rebel ports were made in this harbor. Every favor was extended to the wealthy Southerners, and, to entertain them properly, the Government built the R. V. Hotel at an expense of £25,000. The negroes often refer to that golden time with heartfelt sadness; and yet I doubt if the boom benefited anybody permanently. I am told that the hurricane visiting Nassau, shortly after the close of the war, did immense damage, but did not destroy the property of any who were loyal to the North. I don't vouch for this distinction.

In one of our walks we saw a *vine* bearing such good-looking cotton that we stopped and asked the negro who was nearest, if they didn't ever grow it to sell. "Oh, no, Missus," he replied, "we jes raises enough to put in teeth and ears." Castor oil grows wild,—at least the castor bean does: it grows into sizable trees and is perennial. Time after time we have bought the last oranges, yet they continued along till a few days since, and I am now convinced there are no more postscripts forthcoming. Mam-ees are "full," but how can I describe them? A mamee is a large, light-brown apple, with flecks of chocolate upon its thick leathery skin. I peel off this

skin, and find orange flesh underneath. I cut down with my knife, and to my amazement encounter stony resistance. I explore and cut out four seeds, and each of them is larger than a butternut ! Then I see that I might have cut between the seeds and made a much better job of it. There is an indigestible taste to mamees when fresh, and so we cut them up and stew them. They are good, and "favor" the pineapple in flavor. Mangoes are smaller. Oh dear, they are like nothing I can think of in shape ; they are not like any fruit I ever saw or heard of. I can only tell you that they are yellow, or orange, with black and red speckles as they mellow. We peel off the skin, and come to a juicy layer of deliciousness that reminds one of a peach, perhaps, but as to cutting it off from its large, almond-shaped seed, that is what you can't do, try you never so valiantly. The only way to avail yourself of the rich and luscious pulp is to follow Lemuel's advice and "jes' gnaw it, missus." We don't think there is anything else so good unless it is the soursop. The papaw is a curious product that we do not like, nor can we bring ourselves to Jamaica apples ; but the dark-green sugar-apples delight us, whenever we can find them.

Poser Estelle and Tantens gave me their Nango song one day, Somehow I doubt the purity of this scrap, and judge it to be a child's nonsense, but this is it :

"O yow, O yow, de toffah !  
Shaky, wawa, wawa coovah.  
Barro meco, barro way,  
Barro dora, arrah tora.  
Dooloo-cahsoo-dooloo."

Each line was repeated with exactly the same wild, weird melody : then,

“ Oh, shaky wawa, wawacoovah,  
Yahyah coovah, yah cooyah.”

Every few days we start for Fox Hill, and the last time turned out the usual result, for we stopped to gather a fresh supply of holders from the sea-grape ; we found a new color in oleanders ; there was a fascinating aloe to be borne away ; we went into three marine curiosity shops, to be confronted by an endless variety of sponges and loveliest corals. We all stood under the great banyan-tree near Thompson's Folly, and though the wise and learned may sneer and air their scientific doubts, we firmly believe it to be Milton's kind of fig-tree,

“ Such as to this day to Indians known  
In Malabar or Deccan,”

for we saw with our own eyes that

“ daughters grow  
About the mother tree, a pillared shade.”

And there, too, were the

“ intertisted fibres serpentine,  
Up-coiling and inveterately convolved.”

Then there were huge ants' nests to be tapped, and ferns to be gathered ; there was a desperately thorny tree with no leaves, but gloriously adorned with spikes of dark-red, velvety flowers. They call it “ thunder and lightning ! ” We meandered off down to Fort Montague, and there Trixie, being let loose upon the shore, knew not when to leave her pastures new. Benita was anxious to secure a good sketch of this ruined

fort. I gathered all the plants, and then sat down in the shade and read Ruskin. Sunset found us only half-way home, for how could we lose the sight of the blood-red sun, that left its burning track straight across the blue waves toward us?

April 16.

We have had three remarkable days. They say it's the rainy season, but you can't think how queer it is, for it *does* not rain much, and the skies are not alike for five minutes, and all the time it is warm and lovely. To-day is clear again, with a strong north wind. We went down to the shore for an hour. The waves were coming over the west end of Hog Island like a mimic Niagara, and the roar of the surf was tremendous. It is what they call a "rage," and the red flag is flying to warn off the incoming vessels.

Our garden grows as never garden grew before. We bring home cactus "leaves" that are budded, and stick them down in the stones, where they blossom for us in due season. We have one kind that a woman told us is often planted by the front door. If a visitor comes, and finds the family out, he writes his name upon the cactus, in place of leaving a card.

Aunt Jamaica is a very dignified person, and one who likes to be noticed; she is rather piously inclined in her "conversation," but what her "walk" may be, I do not know. It rained last night, and to-day she said, after inquiring for our "sistah" and our "ma," "God so like, he make storm in night, now he make good in the mawnin', so you come out an' get crumb

of bread." Lent is observed with great strictness. She said to us, "Oh, my pries' he keep up Lent jes' like Catholic. He bring all rememb'ance o' Chris' from his trial to end,—from first day he start to take his trial, all right along." The other day she was much depressed by the loss of three black pigs that had been poisoned, perhaps accidentally, by a neighbor, which she considered pretty hard usage—something not "de Lawd's doin' at all."

As to our poultry, Corallena still lives. Every day or two our senior remarks that the hen must be killed. This is the signal for a two-cent fresh egg, and the fearful deed is postponed. She has now a companion, whom we name Ahcoocoo; and this latter fowl manifests a decided preference for rose-leaves and watermelon seeds, and is quite scornful of more plebeian diet. The cocks crow all night long, whether from exuberance of spirit, or from the pangs of hunger, I cannot yet determine.

It is a constant surprise to us that plants perfect their fruit and leaves, and then start right off into a new season of productiveness. Our crops of roses lap on to each other, and that is the habit of most flowers. Every week we discover new objects of interest in our tiny domain. One day it is a guava, or a pomegranate that we identify; then a lovely jasmine, with flowers like little double roses, shoots out of a brown, dry bush. We have a ravishing vine that they call blue-bells of Scotland; among the vincas and verbenas, is a cherished plant that turns out to be the blue roadside aster, that we gather and delight in when the hazy days of October lure us off in

country roads. Even a tiny silk-cotton seed has found lodgment here beside a banana, and has prospered so far as to assert its royal birth. We have no tropical Botany with us, and our chase for information yields funny and doubtful results. There is a tree like a low, wide-branched apple-tree, that has been a mystification to us. Its few old and scattered leaves resemble those of the honey-locust, and it is hung all over with broad, black, leathery pods from fifteen to twenty inches long, which, as you may fancy, give the tree a funereal aspect. We determined to find a name for this sphinx, and devoted one afternoon to asking every negro that we met near the "funeral tree." It was very comical to see them. They are so anxious to oblige us that they strike an attitude of sharpest scrutiny, as if they would compel the tree to speak ; they walk about it ; they shade their eyes and look all over it ; sometimes they break off a branch, and peel it with an air of expecting a name to appear ; they pull a pod and smell it, evidently hoping that the odor will suggest the wanted word, and then sometimes are obliged to say with a deprecatory manner, "I cahn't rightly tell, missis," or "I don't altogether know, mum." We were told by several who answered promptly, that the tree was punciana, pumciana, goose-tree, and rose-bean, the majority giving us one of the former names ; a white informant said ponenciana, and we dimly remembered-poinziana as some tropical flower, so we are in a state of bewilderment yet.

## XVI.

### FOX HILL.—SPONGING AND SPONGES.—THE FLORA.

BARBARA'S letter continued.—We have been to Fox Hill at last. "Now," said I, as we piled our baskets, and vasculum, and parasols into the carriage, "it's 'Fox Hill or bust,' that waves upon our banner." The Mother was shocked, Benita was grave, Trix drew a sigh of unbelief, but I persisted in leaving the sketch-block at home. I put on my goggles and looked straight ahead, nor did I give ear to divers and sundry covetous remarks of my fellows. John moved gently and quietly from his moorings, and actually surprised us. Had he, too, his modest ambitions? Without extra solicitations, he fell into a mild and continuous trot, but his speed was not so great that we failed to see how the pears had grown in a week. Once we stopped long enough to secure some small branches of the tall, thick-leaved pimento, covered with feathery and fragrant flowers. Then turning aside from the curving shore, we coaxed our pony up the gentle ascent, crowned by a neat little stone chapel, and this was the goal of our desires, for down the long slope was the tiny settlement known as Fox Hill, differing from the other places only in this, that, lying so far from town, the passer-by became the object of more vociferous interest, and was per-

severingly importuned for alms. We were offered some very superior sapodillas, grape-fruit, and limes, but they asked double the price of our Nassau markets. "Oh, gi' me coppah, missus," shrieked a slender woman. "I sick—broke my hade," and she leaned against the wall in a very wilted attitude. Another woman put forward her two months' child to receive some coppers. Said child was arrayed in a short blue gingham dress, and a white sun-bonnet with a pink crown. A little farther on, we were beset by a group of idle women and girls, who could easily keep pace with John's deliberate footsteps. "Gi' me shillin', missus, 'n' I dahnce," cried one; "Gi' *me* shillin' 'n' I dahnce ovah dis yeah wall," screamed another; "I dahnce, I dahnce," called one and another, and none expressed greater eagerness to display her gifts than she of the broken head. Nothing made a greater impression on us than still another group. One called out the familiar question, "You don' wan' any nice fruit, missus,—dillies, bananas, guavas?" We did want guavas, and asked her how many she had, saying that we wanted a quantity. "Cahn't altogether tell, missus," she answered as she rushed off at full speed to her own yard, crying, "*Run*, Lily, foh guavas! *run*, Mary, foh guavas!" and she jumped from stone to stone, making frantic leaps upward to clutch the fruit, then dashing back to the carriage as if life and death depended upon her haste and speed. She had *six* little guavas in a gilt-edged saucer, and of course we could do nothing with so few, as we told her when we had recovered from our merriment. The turbaned heads all shook with



laughter, too, their ivory teeth glistened, and their long ear-rings sparkled in the sun. We drove on past the chapels maintained by the Baptists and the Methodists, past scattered cabins embowered in stately trees, and again a troop followed us, among them a young woman who carried a bright-eyed laughing child, for whom she zealously begged.

"What does he want money for?" asked Beatrix.

"I buy sugar," was the prompt reply.

"Sugar is bad for babies."

"Wants it to put in his tea, missus."

"But tea is particularly bad for children," said Trix, with a severely professional air.

"Wants to get him some close, den. Look at de pooh baby. See if he don' need close."

Trix looked at the plump figure of the little fellow in his one brief garment, and remarked, "I think he has all the clothes he needs."

"Well, den, missus, gi' me coppah to buy vittle for him."

I can't think what other wants she would have devised, for her words were cut off by a little two-year-old, who rushed out of a yard, waved her chubby hand, and bowing to the ground, called out eagerly, "Do, massa!" We were offered "Chaney oranges, nice fresh fruit, (grape-fruit) all verrah nice, all fresh good." A little bargaining transferred the best to our baskets. We bought a curious plume made of jackdaw's feathers, and then John the Moderate walked pensively homeward, and the day was won.

Our thoughts turn more and more to "the land of ice and snow," We rise earlier to make our days

longer, and I don't believe I shall write any more letters. Anthony Trollope, when he was in the post-office business, prided himself on sending up his reports just as he dashed them off, with all their blots, erasures, interlining, and mistakes. You may not think it, but I have not any such pride. I wish I had a copyist in my employ; then you should have no abbreviations to trouble you, no uncertainty of capitals, no 'capsized punctuation,' such as Beatrix always complains of. I hope I have made you in love with our Nassau. If so, the object of my life is accomplished!

Nobody spoke for a full minute. All were thinking of the approaching flitting, and the quartette did not seem quite so gay as was their custom. At last Bee broke in upon the sober reveries of the others by announcing that she had done her share, and more, this time, for she had written up the sponges.

"I wish you wouldn't say 'written up,'" said Barbara. "It doesn't sound well."

"I won't—in the book," promised Beatrix, "but really it is true, truer than it sounds, for it *has* been up-hill work, and no down, easy road at all."

"I should think the subject of sponges would be plain sailing. You go to the sponge-market so often," said the Mother.

"Yes, but you know how full all the accounts have been of statistics, and I have no genius for that kind of description, so I have just left it out. Do you want to hear it?"

"Of course," they all said, and Beatrix modestly presented the following:

EXHAUSTIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE SPONGE.

Sponging is a regular business in Nassau, and one of such large proportions that a Sponge Exchange has been established, governed by rules on the plan of a Stock Exchange; and to do a sponge business successfully in Nassau, a firm must be represented in the Exchange. Sponges are plenty, of course, and cheap. You see sponges lying in the streets and kicking about the wharves that in New York—

Beatrix looked up guiltily as she saw Barbara turning the leaves of a well-worn pamphlet. Barbara found her place, and exclaimed, "You've copied that! It's here in this book, word for word."

"Well, did you think I was going to leave out the quotation marks? Let me go on."

That in New York we should have to pay fifty cents or a dollar for.

"That is all I have copied from the book, but I have written more." The quantity and value of sponges annually exported from the Bahamas has not been uniform. In 1855 sponges were exported to the value of nearly \$50,000; in 1861 of over \$150,000; in 1876, over \$90,000; in 1878, nearly \$125,000; and the average for ten years prior to 1864 was nearly \$87,000.

"It seems to me *that* sounds like a quotation too," said the Mother.

"It is," said Bee unflinchingly.

"Oh, why don't you just write something that you have seen yourself?" Benita urged.

"I have," replied Bee; "but, as I told you, I can not, I just *can not*, write an information article, and I suppose if we say anything at all we must tell those things, so I thought I would copy them; and that is no worse than my predecessors have done."

"Read us what you have then," said Barbara, pointing to Bee's pocket, where a roll of writing-paper was visible. So Beatrix launched forth:

My friends, will you take a short walk with me this morning? I am going to the sponge-market, and you'll not be sorry, for it is always pleasant there; such a long, large, roomy building, which, after all, is only a low, shed-like affair, open at the sides, and at each end; but is not the blue sea a delightful boundary? and are there not always the most delicious breezes at play under the roof? So come, and we will study sponges in the best place in all the Bahamas for that pursuit. Why not find them in their homes, do you say? Why not begin at the first stage of their existence? They are black, and ugly, and ill-smelling when they are taken from the water. You would never suspect what they are, for they look more like fresh liver than anything else. It would not be pleasant, or convenient, for us to go with the fishermen. The schooners are fitted out by a company. How would you like to stand knee-deep on deck among the ugly-looking things? They are left to die there, for the sponge does *not* grow from a seed, as somebody supposed. After being properly cured, they are brought to market.

But if you were to go on one of the spongers

you would soon learn what tiny things they are, whose houses form the masses of sponge that we see in market. A writer has compared a sponge to a city, along whose streets live thousands of inhabitants, each individual taking his food from the water as it passes through the larger and smaller holes. You would learn, too, how, after the animal is dead, his house, or rather his "city of houses," is cast into huge crawls in the sea, where it stays until it is cleansed in part, and the process is finished by the aid of sun and dew, when it is brought to Nassau in company with hundreds of like "cities" to be trimmed and put in market. Now we will find our material, all clean and tidy for study. Here we are, walking down the long shed building between rows of beautiful sponges, piled high upon either side. Did you ever look upon a prettier sight? Our friends in America would laugh at us, I fancy, for saying so; but we are on the ground, and know what we mean. The first days of the week are best for our purpose, and this is Tuesday. There are so many, it is a pleasure to see the mere. Here is a pile of "sheep's-wool sponges," the finest and most useful as well as the most costly of the Bahamian varieties. I will step up to this colored man and inquire about them, as he seems to be keeping guard over the lot. "Can you tell us what they use these for?" "Oh, dey makes broadcloth wid dem, missus," and I retire without another attempt. I like the grass sponges; they take on such queer shapes, and these yellow fellows are very coarse, but pretty too, resting, as do all the piles, on broad beds of palmetto

leaves laid on the floor. The reef sponges are soft and light-colored and generally of quite a uniform size. Many of them are fastened together by strings. Over there is a large pile of finger and glove sponges, queer shaped, compact specimens, rightly named. I long to select a few dozen of the beauties from each pile to shame the ragged things that we pay such prices for in America!

"Can I buy a few sponges here?" I ask.

"Don' know, missus. De 'prietor he over in de sto' 'cross de street. I go ask him,"—but the 'prietor is not inclined to sell unless I will take fifty pounds' worth, which is the value of one of the lots. He is gentlemanly, however, and gives me some information about the business, which is usually done at ten o'clock in the morning, the owners coming in and bidding at sight for the various lots. When the clerk collects the papers, he often finds not more than a farthing's difference in the bids, so expert have these men grown in the long years' apprenticeship. I wonder if they ever see any beauty in the goods they handle? Now and then the fishermen bring in fancy specimens—great, round grass sponges with feathery purple sea-feathers waving over them, their bases in the very centres of the soft cushions; glove sponges so loosely grown that they are only good for the cabinet; surgeon's sponges so little and dainty that one wonders if they will ever grow to look like useful articles. The largest is scarcely an inch and a half in length, and no wider than a finger's breadth. The sponges are not all in the market, indeed they are not there at all in the latter part of the day; for as

soon as the lots are sold, come curious-looking, square carts to take them off. Now and then one is dropped, and if it were proper, the visitor who has never seen these useful articles outside a drug-store would surely pocket some of them. However, it is highly respectable to walk up and down the shore, and there we will turn our steps to-day. It is no irksome duty. An irresistible magnet is our daily excuse for being found to the "west'ard," and here are many sponges in the greatest variety possible; not, however, arranged in such neat rows as are those in the market. Who is there to say us nay, if occasionally we transfer to our bag a fine, large sheep's wool or a reef, or a velvet, or a silk, or a grass, or a finger, or a glove, for they are all here. From among the tangle of gulf-weed and shells and sand, we find not alone the trimmings washed away from the sponge-market, but new fresh specimens, accidentally dropped overboard by the men who prepare them for sale. And since, as everybody knows in Nassau, the sponges can be compressed to a small compass, a bushel into a cigar-box—we may easily carry home fifty in this little bag. Here also are the dainty wire sponges, a beautiful amber color, the size of my little finger, and sometimes a foot in length, so beautiful that we feel compelled to secure one or more for each of our friends. There are two, the curious pine apple and Neptune's Cup, so strange in shape and texture that we can hardly believe that they really belong to the sponge family. Bits of the wonderful bouquet sponges are sticking up out of the sand, so delicate that they resemble the finest lace, and as

pretty in their way as the more elaborate pieces that one can buy at the curiosity shops. We are glad, however, when we have filled our bag to its utmost capacity, to exchange our shillings and pence for some of the "live" specimens. The dealers look with contempt at the sponges picked up on the beach. They consider only those worth looking at that are captured from the sea-garden, and properly cured. It is true that these are finer and more perfect—clearly cut, so to speak. We are obliged to admit that the rough handling given by old ocean is very destructive, and we compare our booty with the treasures of the shops in some dismay. Nevertheless, nobody shall make us throw away our pickings. Every specimen, be it never so worn, will be dear to our hearts and as full of association as it is of sand, when we are far away from this isle of bliss. How shall we describe, to those who have never seen them, the beauty of the so-called bouquet sponges? We have touched upon them already, but how can we make everybody see the delicacy of the curious forms?—a mass of cups growing from the same base, and like nothing so much as a compound flower-stand, such as one might see in a china store. How shall we show the coral sponges, a pliable coral it is, so closely resembling that substance that you are obliged to pinch it softly to make sure of its identity. Describe them? We cannot; we will not try! Fill the baskets, pack boxes, barrels, anything that the customs will allow, and show the friends in America what wonders, such as they never dreamed of, are to



be found in this paradise, for they will never believe except as their eyes behold.

"You forgot about the snake sponge," said the Mother.

"To be sure, and I haven't spoken of the pains they take in trimming, or of nature's freaks in growing them around sticks of coral, shells and the like. Did Lemuel show you the snake sponge he brought up from the dock yesterday? A sailor let him bring it, and Lemuel was sure I'd buy it. He asked—the sailor, not Lemuel—one shilling, but Lemuel said he knew the man would take sixpence for it. I almost wish I had taken it, for it was at least six yards long, all knotted and grown together, crossed and criss-crossed; but I had two or three, and I thought about the packing. 'It's verra cheap, missus,' Lemuel said, 'you don't get no such sponge as dat every day in Nassau.'"

"You will have plenty of opportunities," said the Mother.

## XVII.

### LEMUEL AGAIN.—CHARACTER SKETCHES.

“WHAT was Lemuel talking so earnestly to you about, last night?” asked Benita.

“When? Oh, yes, I remember. I was asking him what that man says—the one who always goes past here early in the morning, and home at five o’clock. You know how he laughs and how he always seems to say the same thing. I have tried to make it out but I never could understand. He told me several days ago that the man ‘hadn’t got hisself.’

“‘What does he say, Lemuel?’ I asked.

“‘He say *I* see Simon, *I* see. Dat his name, missus, *Simon*. He say *I* see Simon.’

“‘What does he mean, Lemuel?’ said I.

“‘He don’ mean noting, missus. He don’ have hisself, dat all, missus.’

“‘But why don’t they put him in an asylum if he is crazy? I should think it would be dangerous to have him in the street,’ said I.

“‘Oh, he not dang’ous, missus, only when he have his spells; den, no man cahn’t interfere wid him.’

“I am glad to know what he says,” remarked Benita, “for it has been a mystery to me, too.”

“Just as we were talking, along came that queer old crazy woman, and as we were on the subject I

thought I would interview Lemuel about her ; so I said :

“ ‘ Is that old woman crazy, too, Lemuel ? ’

“ ‘ She is, Mum. ’

“ ‘ What makes her wear three hats, I wonder. ’

“ ‘ Cahn’t say, Missus. ’

“ ‘ Do you know what she has in that great bundle ? ’ ”

“ What did he say ? ” asked the Mother. “ I have wondered a good deal about that. I watched her the other day for a full half-hour. Her bundle was so heavy that she couldn’t raise it from the ground. She would drag it a few steps and then sit down in the road to rest, and all the time she was talking to herself, only I couldn’t understand much that she said. I heard her mutter ‘ cruel to treat a poor woman so ! Mean to treat a poor woman so ! ’ ”

“ Lemuel knows all about her, ” went on Bee. “ When I asked what she had in her bundle, he said : ‘ Everyting what she got, she take in her bundle, mum—her vittle—her bed—and everyting wot she got, and she carry ’em everywhere she go. ’ Isn’t it queer that Lemuel talks so well sometimes, and then again he uses the dialect in such a way that you would think he had never been to school. ”

“ He forgets himself, ” excused his mistress.

“ ‘ He hasn’t got himself, ’ ” said Barbara.

“ I asked what the poor old woman did ; where she went every day, ” went on Beatrix.

“ ‘ She go round to wite people, mum, and ask for tings. ’

“ ‘ Does she keep all those dogs, Lemuel ? ’ I said.

“ ‘ There are five around her now. ’

" 'She do, mum.'

" 'She hasn't got herself very much, has she, Lemuel ?'

" 'She hasn't, missus. She doesn't know herself.'

" 'Don't the children tease her?' was my next query, 'for I see them almost every day pulling her bundle and catching hold of her coffee-sacking gown.'

" 'They do, mum ; but if a policeman seen 'em do it, he'il arrest 'em, mum. The Governor saw a little gearl teasing her one time, and he had her arrested, missus.'

" 'I think it mean and cruel, just as she says,' I remarked severely.

" 'It is, mum,' said Lemuel with an air of deep conviction."

"I don't believe Lemuel would ever tease such a poor unfortunate," said the Mother.

"My chapter for to-night joins on very comfortably after your conversation with Lemuel," added Benita, "and why shouldn't you put that into the book just as it is ?"

Beatrix laughed derisively, but Barbara suggested that the family should see what the join was without waiting to decide upon the merits of homely conversations, and Benita read what she called

#### A CONTINUATION OF "MY BOY."

Reticent as Lemuel is, I have found out that his domestic relations are not of the brightest. His father is a painter, and as that appears to be a paying business, good alike in summer and winter, which is

not the case in our unfortunate country, I sounded my boy on the wisdom of learning that trade.

"Oh, no, mum, I would not like to be a painter ; I don't want to drink rum !"

I looked up at Lemuel in visible amazement, and he continued :

"Painters has to drink rum, missus, or dey dies ; de paint goes to deir heads."

I thought it quite as likely that the rum went to their heads, but forebore to say so. "That takes from their profits, too, doesn't it?"

"Oh, not so much, mum. My father don't spend more dan a shillin' a day."

"Too much, Lemuel, don't you think so?"

"Yes, mum. I don't want to drink no liquor nor smoke no tobacco."

Perhaps that explained in some sort the low value Lemuel set on paternal capabilities. When I asked him casually who was his best friend, he replied with great promptness,

"Oh, my mother, mum."

"Why your mother more than your father?"

"Why, mum, if my father should die, I could get another father, but I couldn't never get another mother."

"And how could you get another father?"

"Any of dese men on the schooners would be a father to me, mum. I could go out any day and get one."

This also may explain why the houses Lemuel points out to me as having belonged to his father evidently have other owners, and also why Lemuel

lives with his uncle in the east part of the city. A forlorn home it must be, for his uncle is a fisherman without a family ; he is often away for days at a time, and as Lemuel sleeps at Fort Fincastle, earning a pittance by attending to the signals, the advantages of household life can not be extensive in any case. Perhaps his uncle makes him welcome to his hospitable board—when he has one ; but I can't help a doubt on the subject when Lemuel refers so frequently to his pinched stomach. He goes on with the chair almost gayly, managing it with one hand, and he said he would like to "turn it" all day if he had a "full stomach," so I attribute every failure or hesitation to hunger. It often transpires, in the course of our morning adventures, that he has had no breakfast. If, in my dismay thereat, I give him a copper, he buys a slice of pudding or a piece of sugar-cane in the market, and sits down under a tree to take in nutriment enough to go on.

"What will you do when I am gone?" I asked one day, as I sat sketching a grand African palm in Burnside Lane, while he reposed idly on the road-bed near my chair.

"I'll get a place in one o' de shops," replied the sanguine youth, who had so often given me fancy for fact that my fears for his future were not relieved.

"Are you sure that you can find a place?" I persisted.

"No, mum ; but I know I can get it."

"And how much will they give you?"

"'Bout a dollar and a half a week, mum."

"But that will not pay your board, Lemuel."

"Well, mum, I've got friends. Any one will gi' me my board."

"Are you sure? said I, more troubled than ever. "In my country, board costs three dollars a week at least, and people do not give it away in that fashion."

"Oh, well, mum, I'd have to buy my grub."

So I understood that Lemuel merely referred to lodging. Some time before he told me that he was going out in the *Santiago*, to wash potatoes for the cook. This was before I had gauged his system of planning, and I was rather disturbed by it.

"By the next steamer, Lemuel?"

"Yes, mum," he replied firmly.

"What shall I do then? You must recommend some good boy to me, Lemuel."

"Oh, I'll stay by you, missus. I'll go out on de very ship you do, mum."

I asked if he had engaged his passage, and found he had neglected that little precaution.

"But I'll be shore to go, mum. I know I'll go. And when I gets dar (I found by skillful queries that 'dar' meant New York) I'll go to work for a farmer in Jersey."

"New Jersey, do you mean? But that's a larger place, much larger, than this island, with a great many farms. Do you know the man's name?"

"I couldn't tell you, mum."

"Nor where he lived?"

"No, missus; I couldn't rightly say; but I'll find him when I gets to New York."

"But how, Lemuel?"

"I'll just go into a drug-store and inquire."

I tried to dismay or enlighten this confident soul, by talk of New York streets or crowds, but with small effect. I asked if he knew what steam-cars were.

"Yes, mum ; dere was a boy dat watch his mother's tea-kettle boil, mum. I know 'bout him."

This was encouraging, and I went on to describe the cars, eliciting rather more interest than was common with Lemuel, but no surprise.

"Yes, mum ; and dey has a road all to demselves, I hear, mum."

We were on the shore road, near West Bay Street, and I drew the rails on the white street ; but Lemuel preferred to air his own knowledge just then.

"And I hear from England, mum, that dey runs seventy miles a minute."

I hastened to correct this idea, with my usual success. Lemuel went on:

"Yes, mum ; seventy miles a minute, mum ; and dey say if you just put you' head out of the window into the pewater air, it take your head right off."

"Oh, Lemuel !"

"Yes, mum ; and dey say if you see it coming as it were over dere at Hog Island, mum, and you run down here to the shore, as it were, mum, you'd be killed, mum."

Then I proceeded to fill his ears with horrors, but somehow he had no interest in my tales, and I took occasion to measure his stores of science.

"I think there is a schooner coming, Lemuel."

"Yes, mum ; I see her dis morning, and I put up the flag for her, missus."

"Which part did you see first?"



"De sail, missus."

"Why does the sail show first?"

"I couldn't say, mum," in the usual indifferent tone, that always pulled me up short.

"What shape is the earth, Lemuel?"

"I put it flat, mum."

"No, Lemuel, it is round. Did you ever learn that at school?"

"I never did, mum."

"At this, I attempted some of the familiar proofs of my childhood.

"If I hold this orange up so, Lemuel, and a fly is crawling over towards me from the other side, which part of him shall I see first?"

"De orange, mum?"

"No, no, Lemuel, the fly."

"On de orange, mum?"

And so on, till his mind was slowly dislodged from one point after another, and it seemed as if that seed of knowledge was securely planted, to fructify under a tropical sun.

"We shall never grow tired of Lemuel's originalities," said Bee. "He's coming at eight o'clock in the morning to go to market with us, and do you know, he has developed a genius for promptitude of late, and I saw him on the steps yesterday waiting for the clock to strike."

They had opened a can of sorrel preserves from the "Cake and Candy Store," and Bee said it was a good preparation for the evening. "By the way, Benita has a real stingy paper this time. I must believe she spends most of her time painting."

"Of course I do. What did we come here for?"

"To write a book," promptly responded Bee.

"No, indeed, we never thought of it. Oh, that dreadful child, Liber! He'll be the death of you."

"How do you know what I thought of before we set out on this most prosperous journey?"

"If you thought of it, nobody else did," said Barbara severely.

"It was not necessary. There needs but one engineer in any enterprise, and I feel perfectly competent to fill that office," responded Bee loftily. "But listen to this letter; it is much more interesting than the conversation."

"What letter is it, my dear?" asked the Mother.

"Oh, it's a letter that Aunt Peace brought me; it is from her daughter in Key West, and she said I might keep it two or three days. It is so good in its way that I don't believe she will care if I copy it for the book, do you?"

"Still harping on my daughter," remarked Barbara.

"Not at all," retorted Beatrix. "It's on *her* daughter. Here is the direction on the envelope:

"To MRS

PEASE BRETTAN

Nassau n p"

"And here's the letter :

Ky Vest florida

May 4th 1886

My dear mother I now tak my pen in hand to writ you these fue lines hoping it may find you in good health Aas it leaves me at present Brother is well I hir from

him Every week Joseph is well but he is not in half of Ky west is burnt down dear mother it was a site on Earth to behold it caught up town and swep as it went it Clain out down toen dear mother I never Expect to see such site as it was in my day It makes me think of ding [dying] and if on fitful [unfaithful] o mother how shall we stand I due hope and strust mother you are looking to Christ four all of your wonts we live in Earth To part but in heaven if faithful we part no more pray on mother pray untill you reach home when you pray you think of those who are diston in body but not in mind. I often prays for you at Knight and day and asks the Good one if my mother life is there help help hur on the Good old way thanks none of us did not Get in no trubble thanks his naim But there was some in trubble some is goin acoos four 2 years and 6 months dear mother I received all of the things you sent me I am still on prayin groun I am blessed above thousand desired to see their own but ware are they thir voice is not be heard I will write you on the next boat remember love to all of the friends I will say more but the time is running up so I will have to closed and say now the lord be with you and on all if we never meet thir on Earth I do trust We meet around his troon in heaven to sit and sing with Engles this Earth we Cry is not ours place we seak aplace in

heaven Good

Knight loving kind mother the lord bless you and me  
your diston Child Eary.

Ferry

Ky west &c.

"A very good letter," said the Mother.

"She was as proud as proud could be," said Beatrix.

"O my missy," she said to me, with her eyes full of tears, "'she be good child to me. She not be like de oders. She be kin' and' good chil' to me.'"

"Simple old soul!" said the mother. "I wish we could do something for her, she is so very poor."

"I'm going to make her a long white apron this very week, and won't she be proud to wear it to church next Sunday? I don't believe she ever had as pretty a one as I shall make," said Barbara.

"I'll make it," said the Mother, "if you will buy the material, and one for each of those other poor souls in market, for fear they should be jealous."

"Here is something," said Benita a little later, "and I'll try to read it as slowly as possible to make it longer."

It was early in the day, and Lemuel took me down to one of the wharves where a schooner had just discharged its cargo of pineapples. One of the men came up and placed himself on a pile of boards near us, for a little talk. He was rather above the average of his race in intelligence and especially in his inquisitiveness, a quality mostly left out of their composition. He made regular trips from Eleuthera, he told me, and would be very glad to take me there. I could pick up beautiful red shells and "lots of curiosities"; but when I tried to negotiate with him to bring some of them for a goodly consideration, he demurred. "We mostly thinks it too much trouble, missus." He wanted to go to America; he wanted to see the Americans get possession of the island, and make work for the poor people, and he went on to denounce the English rule in no measured terms. Suddenly he paused in his tirade, and said insinuatingly, "I guess you better gi' me thrippence, missis."

"What for?" said I, very much astonished at this turn in the conversation.

"Why, just to help me 'long, missis."

Hereupon I informed him that he had better give up the idea of going to America. "People that think anything of themselves do not ask for money. Some of them would starve before they would do it."

"Is dot so?" said he reflectively, looking at me with the frankest smile. "Joe," he called to his companion, "she say people up dere don' ask for coppers unless dey is sick." Joe came and sat down to hear more, and I delivered quite a homily to the good-natured fellows, but with small result.

This was rather a rambling excursion, and Lemuel came to a pause in the market where I stopped to greet Aunt Jamaica. "How you do, missy?" she said in her usual dreamy, preoccupied way. "An' how is your mamma, an' your sisters, an' all your family?" I told her we were all well, and she blessed God fervently as for a special mercy. "And how is your health, aunty?"

"Not so verra well, missy, but, tank Gawd, I'm speared. An' you keep Lemmy yet, dat bahd boy?"

"Why, what is the matter with Lemuel?" I inquired, ready to take up the cudgels for my faithful squire.

"Oh, Lemmy ain't so verra bahd; he jest sassy," replied Aunt Jamaica. "Go ober dere an' get me a heap o' peppers, chile. I doan go off an' leave dat Marianne to oberlook my tings. We doan make much now, missy,—a coppah here an' a coppah dere.

You see dis market in de war times, missy, you tink we all get rich, but it all go quick."

"What is the matter with Marianne? I thought she seemed like a nice woman."

"I say nothing about Marianne. She stop at one end of the town, I stop at other; she has her friends, I has mine."

Aunt Jamaica's attention was distributed among her goods; she never looked at me, but always seemed to be searching for something. "I hope there's nothing wrong about her," I persisted, for I saw a story ahead; and, after a little more fussing, she looked around to see that the market-woman in question had left her stall, and began:

"She called me a awful name, missy, an' I couldn't ober-look it."

"What was it, aunty?"

"Well, missy," sinking her voice to a solemn whisper, "she call me de *woman o' Babylon!*" After a long pause, she went on. "A man came into de market an' stepped on my dog's foot, so dat he cried, an' she said it wasn't no mattah. Then I tol' her to get out o' my way, and she called me that word, missy, and I jes take hol' o' her neck with my two hands, and jam her head 'gainst de wall."

"Why, aunty!" I was confounded by this account, for Aunt Jamaica has been apparently the most proper and devout of all our market acquaintances.

"Yes, missy, I did. I not have no high words, I say no names: I jam her head."

I asked if Marianne submitted to this treatment,

"Oh, she makes no fuss in market, to call folks. She go her way; I go mine."

I begin to think that, in spite of the good woman's religion, Lemuel may have had some excuse for being "sassy" when she tries to order him around, as she has a lofty way of doing. She lives alone in her little, one-roomed cabin, for which she is trying to pay twenty-five pounds purchase-money; she also wants to buy two "tass" of land. She has no chimney outside, like most of her neighbors, but has to make a fire in her charcoal furnace after her market duties are over, and then retire out of doors till the smoke has cleared.

"Why don't you come and see us?" I asked at parting. She had expressed a desire to do so one day.

"Well, missy, I think and think, but I can't find nothing nice to bring."

"Now that is what I call a coincidence," remarked Bee. "I have Lemuel and Aunt Jamaica, and so have you, but I do think I have succeeded a little the best with the dialect."

"I can't attempt that," said Benita. "I see these people and hear them talk less often than you two, so it comes to pass that my dialect is only an occasional word."

"Barb can make it all right after a while," said Beatrix contentedly. "It doesn't matter now."

"It is time for me to hold forth," said that individual. "Don't you care to know whether I have Lemuel and Aunt Jamaica for my topics?"

"We'll stop talking now," said Beatrix, sitting down to her shells. A large box containing dozens of smaller ones occupied her camp-stool at her side, and she began a spray of orange flowers, piercing the dainty crape shells with a steel needle. The Mother moved her chair close to the stool, and fingered the pretty things, while Barbara opened her sheet, and read :



## XVIII.

### STRAY PICTURES AND EXPERIENCES.—FOREBODINGS OF DEPARTURE.

NASSAU, N. P., April 29.

**M**Y DEAREST FRIENDS :—This is what has happened. It was a Wednesday night, and the cathedral clock had solemnly declared the hour of eight. A scrubber had visited us in the morning, and our floors were a joy to us. A pony named Charlie had proved himself just as safe as John, and we had enjoyed a most delightful drive in a flamboyant carriage, and we had contemplated a whole harness. The breeze fluttered our curtains and regaled us with mingled perfumes from the adjoining gardens of spices. The Mother was knitting one of those endless strips for her new rug ; our artist painting away in her sketch-book ; I was reclining in a steamer chair awaiting the moment when I should be asked to begin the new book, and Beatrix was glancing over the semi-weekly that had just been thrown into the gallery. We gave three separate gasps of wonder, consternation, and disappointment as she read :

“We perceive by the new steamer schedule that there will be no steamer leaving New York for this port on the 29th, and consequently no departure from here on the 17th of May, as previously advertised.”

Silence reigned profound for some minutes. To

leave upon the 3d of May gave us only nine days wherein to pack our trophies and our miscellaneous belongings, to finish our sight-seeing, to execute certain commissions, and to dispose of our camp equipage; for we cannot "up and away" with the celerity of army people, nor "silently steal away" like the much-envied Arab. He, unhappy wanderer, has no heavy trunks, no shipwrecked plates with clematis and closed gentians on them, no ruffles and drapings to pack, no jars of "lucent syrups tinct with cinnamon," nor yet the glistening ruby jellies that gladden our housewifely souls. The two upon whom the winding up would largely devolve groaned audibly, and voted to wait till May 30. Benita, to whom April 19 had once seemed the latest possible date for our flitting, smiled as she thought that we might be obliged to wait till almost June; but the face of the Mother was sad, and her words were few.

Another perfect morning dawned, and we gathered about our board with fewer frivolous remarks than usual, with fewer remarks indeed of wisdom; but there was a subdued gladness in the mien of three of us, while the poor Mother had spent a sleepless night as visions of a midsummer house-cleaning and gardens running to waste inflamed her mind's eye, while the carpet-bug swarmed before her prophetic vision.

"I thought you enjoyed being here," broke out Beatrix from a gloomy pause after the coffee-pouring. "Don't you remember what you said yesterday as we were driving home?"

"I do like it—well enough."

"Then why are you in such haste to leave? It

will half kill us all to go on the third. If you really enjoy Nassau, why not take a little extra in that line, and be duly thankful ?”

“ I like it well enough to stay a reasonable time,” she resumed plaintively, “ but I don't know as I want to end my days here.”

“ For my part,” spoke up Benita, “ I know of no place where I'd rather die and be buried.”

But nothing availed to cheer the Mater's drooping spirits. Of course, it was nothing to her, she said. She only came to please us anyway. She should not live many years longer, but she *was* attached to her home, and as long as she had one, she'd like to go and see how it looked occasionally. This with as much injured feeling in her tone as if we were four wandering Jews.

So we stepped down to the Ward office to canvass the question of state-rooms. It fell out, as we supposed, that we could not be certain of the ones we coveted unless we set our departure later than we had planned. This, being duly reported, was accepted as inevitable, and a good night's rest restored the lost tranquillity.

And now we gloat over the fortnight we have gained. We know the location of Black Beard's well, and it is said that whoever drinks of it will never leave Nassau. Shall we go and take a draught ? That way gladness lies.

Saturday morning Poser insisted upon seeing the “ Missus,” as she calls me. She had a white and yellow rooster that she was sure I would buy, and although the two hens we are keeping are enough to

care for, the Mother was smitten with his beauty, and added him to her collection, saying, "He's not at all like Thukedides ; he's of a better sort altogether." His lungs are powerful, and he is known as Boanerges Samuel.

We went to a colored Baptist Church lately, and the preacher gave a very good sermon from the text, "Ye are bought with a price." He said: "People use disinfectants to keep off bad air and disease, but God is the great disinfectant. One very remarkable sentence was this: "Unlest we fall into the ditches, unlest we fall into the sneers [snares] set for us, unlest we are led away by the enemy, we should be stagnated and impregnated by the beauty of holiness." His temperance views were also set forth: "Now I wouldn't go so far as to say that it is a sin to take a glass of beer or a glass of wine, but I would recommend total abstinence—I recommend total abstinence." Once or twice he remonstrated with some of his flock for looking out of the window and for not giving more earnest heed to what he was saying. These people all sang, but unless I looked on the book I had no clue whatever to the words. They sing very slowly, and so get all the good possible from the exercise. Many of our street and market acquaintances were there, and they were very proud and happy when we spoke to them, but one advised us to "step along right smart, cause they's going to be a squall right soon."

We have had a beautiful redfish to paint,—a most remarkable fish, with eyes like globes of polished quartz crystal ; hence how pat is the name of him,—

"glass-eyed-snapper." There are gorgeous green fish, and yellow fish and blue fish, a rainbow-fish, and various angel-fish. The cow-fish is as triangular as a beechnut, and the head is strikingly like that of a cow, horns and all. "School-master" and "old wife" are among other curious names of the "denizens of the deep."

New fruits are coming, among them the egg-fruit, which is an oblate spheroid, two inches in diameter, bright yellow, smooth, shiny; it has one or two seeds, larger than watermelon seeds; the flesh is of the color, consistency, and taste of a hard-boiled yolk of egg slightly sweetened. Some of us like it very much, and we eat it with bread and butter. What they call the mammee support is almost like it, except that the fruit is oval, and seeds much larger and more beautiful. Rose-apples we are very fond of; they are as large as our largest crab-apples, and are white, with a pinkish tinge. We shake them, and hear a seed like a hazelnut rattling against the sides; we eat them, and they taste like good little apples, strongly flavored with real roses.

This is the manner of preserving mangoes, taken down from the lips of an adept. "You peel 'em, missus, peel 'em, peel 'em all nicely; den you slice 'em, slice, slice, like you slice potatoes foh fry; den you put 'em in pot, an' bile an' bile till sour come off. You trow de sour off, you trow in sugar, an' you bile an' bile, an' I know you like 'em." I asked which she preferred, mammees or mangoes. "Oh, missus, I likes dem both too much," and we endorse her opinion. Sappans are now "full,"—purple things

about like damson plums, somewhat puckery. Cocoa-plums are ripening, but they have huge stones and but a thin layer of pulpy skin, and they don't pay.

You could not be here long without seeing that vast quantities of intoxicating liquor are received, retailed, used, and paid for. "Licensed to retail spirituous liquors" is the sign displayed from dozens of little huts not more than ten feet square. Such a license costs twenty pounds a year. I believe that no retailing is allowed in the city proper, but there is plenty elsewhere, and drunkenness is very prevalent.

A church fair for the sale of useful and fancy articles and light refreshments was announced for the Tuesday following Easter. I remembered the customs of my native land, and I said to the others, "Here we have the key to this Turkish look of things that has so puzzled us. Every woman and girl has been sitting behind the jalousies, working her fingers to the bone for this fair." We went across the street to the Church Hall on the opening afternoon. Upon the first long table, which the paper calls a booth, were piles of children's clothes and ladies' aprons, while the two others were filled with the usual array of fancy articles,—beautiful embroideries, and elegant and costly trifles. There were some flowers, but they suffered, so far as lovely roses could be made to suffer, by tasteless arrangement. Judge of our surprise to know that all these things had been made in English schools, and had been sent out for the benefit of the Bahamians!

We sat down and partook of tiny morsels of ice-cream, made of condensed milk; we paid twelve cents

for small "cuts" of cake; we bought some very queer aprons, all sewed by hand, and then we adjourned, not unwillingly. Do you suppose that any one gave us friendly greeting, or made us welcome in any way, as we should do in our church gatherings, where we look after the stranger, and make him heartily at home? Not so in Nassau; but "blessed are them that don't expect nothin'," and we have had sufficient experience with these singular people to expect nothing. We only smile at their exclusiveness and their evident pride, though what they can pride themselves upon, one is at a loss to know, since there is so little wealth, and there are no means of acquiring the culture that is common in our land; indeed, the ordinary education of a high school cannot be obtained here. We sometimes wonder what would become of us in an emergency, sickness for instance, when one has need of friends. I am proud of our American churches when I feel the icy coldness of these.

Do you suppose that a black man's appearance is improved when his nails are stained bright red? And why do they put thick socks and woolen hoods on small black babies?

There are many shell-workers here, who seem to do a fair amount of business in the manufacture of baskets, crosses, etc., One woman has made yards of lovely sprays for the Princess Beatrice and other English ladies. Roses, jasmines, orange-flowers, and other flowers are cunningly fashioned, and when used upon a dress material which she assured us is superior to satin, the effect must be charming.

Scales of the blue porgie and of the white bone-fish are wrought into beautiful pins. Beatrix has been spending her evenings over the fascinating work. The professionals give lessons, but ordinary intelligence, some little power of observation, and a fair amount of practice will turn out creditable results. We showed some of these early attempts to Ann Lightfoot, and she lifted up her hands with "hadmiration hamounting to hawe," and when she recovered breath she said, "Oh, what a head you got ! You got great sense."

April 30.

Last night we went to a concert given for the benefit of the Sons of Temperance, twenty-four cents admission to reserved seats. A small audience was present,—nor was it the upper crust of Nassau's pie, we observed ; for we know nearly all the white people by sight. At the back of the grand piano on the large platform, six great flags were festooned, the Stars and Stripes along with the Union Jack ; the footboard was covered with Turkey-red cloth, and over that hung a fringe of russelia, a plant like a mammoth equisetum. It grows five or six feet high here, and is very pretty, for its airy foliage is hung with scarlet flowers. The russelia rose from the green of the loveliest of ferns. There were beautiful arrangements of roses and adiantums, and a very effective use was made of palmetto-leaves upon the high walls. Two Methodist pastors gave each a five-minutes' talk upon temperance,—mild, wandering talks they seemed to us, who are accustomed to fire and energy. The singers were vivacious and natu-



ral. It goes without saying that we enjoyed the music, which was largely vocal. Singing seems to be the one accomplishment of the Nassauese, the only thing about which they show any enthusiasm. The programmes were odd enough, printed on small half-sheets of common printing paper, with common type, and such odd arrangements as

“4. BALLAD, ‘Romance—‘Love’—Mrs. Bishop—  
H. J. O’Neil.”

“Instru.” means that some instrument is to be used while a vocal solo is always announced as “Song.” One soloist put his music before him on a stand, then fronted the audience with his thumbs in his vest-pockets and his elbows straight out. After No. 8 came an interval for refreshments, which consisted of ice-cream in wine-glasses, fruit-cake, and iced tea. Then the concert went on till decorously ended by the national air, which finishes every festal gathering.

The Inagua school-mistress brought a bundle of palmetto-leaves this morning, and taught Beatrix how to “plaht a bahsket”; so with all these new accomplishments, I feel that she will not find life a burden hereafter.

Lemuel, alas! has relapsed from his punctuality; but as he was only fifteen minutes behind time this morning, we finished our marketing early. I am trying to give him some idea of time and its value, and I mean to teach him that ten o’clock isn’t the same to me as eight, if persistent talking will do it. He is perfectly honest, and likes nothing better than to buy

any article for which we send. This morning we bought a fish-skin, hog bananas, tomatoes, sapodillas, cabbage, green turtle steak, sweet potatoes, sliced bacon, and green turtle for soup. An old woman had a heap of prickly pods which she said was "culrin," and that it was used in soup. We asked a score or so of people about them, as we carried them around, and finally became sure they were annatto. The fish-skin we shall take to America as a voucher for some of our stories. Our dinner was so good ! We all like green turtle and tomatoes and all these other things, but the Mother and Benita persist in declining the luscious mango because neither knife, fork, nor spoon can make them easy eating.

This afternoon Beatrix and I walked off to an old quarry, stopping to peer over walls and look through gates, if fortunately they were not solid. The people fill their balcony boxes with verbenas, phlox, golden-rod, and asters, while crotons, dracenas, caladiums, jasmines, stephanotis, etc., take care of themselves in the open ground. We saw among new wonders a tree full of scarlet blossoms in clusters, eight inches high ; each flower was larger than a nasturtium, and one petal was spotted with yellow and brown. Our way led past the Potter's Field, which is the Christ Church burial-place, and as it was Saturday afternoon the gates were open, and many women and girls were putting quantities of flowers on the graves, according to their weekly custom. It is one of the minor recreations of this staid and severe people. Here we found new and beautiful lilies of the amaryllis family, quantities of the pink-flowered vine that

we admire, and again the scarlet-flowered tree, but this time its tell-tale pods helped us to identify our old friend, the flamboyante, as Mrs. Brassey calls it: in the Hawaiian Islands it is called the poinciana. We went to the quarry on purpose to dig bulbs of the flyaway lily, for we had discovered it growing and blooming beneath a broken-down cart. The petals of this deliciously fragrant lily are not more than a quarter of an inch wide, although they measure more than three inches in length from the cup from whence they start ; they are white, and the effect is decidedly ethereal and fairy-like. A wounded donkey was tethered to the cart by a long rope, and he manifested so much curiosity concerning our excavations that Trixie was fully employed in keeping him away from my immediate vicinity. Those bulbs seemed wedged fast in the innermost caverns of the earth, among stones and glass ; but when I had once secured a huge fellow four inches in diameter, I deployed easily to the right and left, and exhumed a baker's dozen. We found beautiful aloe flowers, leaves from the logwood for our leaf-book, tall eupatoriums, moon-flowers, a wild jasmine, and then we came home over the hill that we might watch the reddest of suns as he sank in the bluest of waves.

I have been taking a fresh "pull" at the Almanack, and I am appalled at the machinery that is necessary to govern the Bahamas. There were less than 40,000 inhabitants on the twenty-one inhabited islands in 1881. In the Bahamian Archipelago there are said to be twenty-nine islands, 661 keys, and 2387 rocks ; but for this sparse population upon them, we have a

Governor at a salary of \$10,000 and a house to live in, and without doubt the picturesque black Zouaves always on guard, and the one who sits with the driver on the barouche that squeaks by occasionally, are also paid for their ornamental services by the home government. One of the Zouaves, however, raises a flag every morning, and lowers it whenever His Excellency leaves the mansion. Now, for this great people, there is also an Executive Council, a Legislative Council, and a House of Assembly. In the Civil Department there is the Colonial Secretary's office, Treasury, and Customs, Port officers, Registrar's office, Surveyor - General's office, Post Office, N. P. Asylum, Medical Department, Inspector of Public Schools, Librarian, Clerk of the Market, and Keeper of the Town Clock, which clock is yet an unknown quantity to me. The Judicial Department is well equipped, for there are no less than eight courts, namely, Court of Ordinary, of Errors, Vice-Admiralty, General Court Equity Side, ditto Criminal and Civil Side, Court of Commons Pleas, of Bankruptcy, and Divorce. There is a police office, seventeen justices, and a well-equipped prison. There is a Board of Education, and a list of thirty-five schools; a Board of Agriculture, of Works, of Health, of Pilotage. Then I find a list of fifty-seven general justices and twenty-seven district justices. The Military Department occupies only two lines, and consists of a Captain, who is the commanding officer, and a Lieutenant, who is acting Garrison Adjutant and Detachment Paymaster. Of course, with so many offices to be filled, and so few men of any

education, each man is liable to occupy several different offices ; for instance, I see that in the Imperial Department a Major in rank is also Assistant Commissary General in charge of the commissariat and transport staff, ordnance store department, and treasury chest, Acting District Paymaster, Naval Agent, Accountant and Auditor to the Board of Trade, and also Auditor of Crown Revenues. There is a Royal Engineer Department, of which the afore-said captain is the "Acting Engineer," and I hardly think his duties are at all burdensome. There are eleven lighthouses, and so there is a department for them. In the Ecclesiastical Department I find eighteen rectors, priests, and deacons ; one Presbyterian minister ; eight of the Wesleyan Mission ; and one Baptist missionary. There is a Bible Society, St. Andrew's Society, and a Diocesan Temperance Society, which must be rather singular in its workings, since at least one of the officers does not believe in the pledge. The Sons of Temperance are represented here ; there are numerous Friendly Societies, there are five Masonic Lodges, and three of the I. O. O. F. Can you think why this quiet little place should need consuls to represent Denmark, Portugal, Sweden, France, and the German Empire ? I can see some reason for those standing for the Dominican Republic, Spain, and the United States. I have wondered how the men spent their time ; but if one can be a Member of the House, a Surveyor of Shipping, a Registrar in three courts, a Clerk in two others, fulfil the duties of a Justice of the Peace, be a delegate to a synod, serve on the committee of a

Bible Society, figure as District Grand Secretary in one lodge and as P. M. Secretary in another, be the G. W. C. S. of the I. O. O. F., the D. Sec. of the G. U. O. O. F., and the P. W. G. M. elsewhere, it is not hard to imagine that he is busy. Those souls who aspire to office should come to Nassau, turn loyal Britons, and ever after be happy; that is, if honor will suffice without the spoils, for I believe that the emoluments are in the inverse ratio of the titles.

The last steamer brought us letters many and delightful. It is a pity, dear Miss E., that your *amende honorable* reached me just three hours too late, and that I felt obliged to cross your name; and it is a mystery to us, A. R., how a cold, just a cold, can act upon your once nimble and charming pen so as to disable it entirely. You must keep to your promises, friends, or you will be justly dealt with.

I shall write to you again, unless packing proves a more formidable task than we think. Already the sadness of departure affects us, even while we look forward to our home and our beloved friends.

## XIX.

### WE GO TO PRISON AND ELSEWHERE.

HOW fast the days rolled round ! all too fast for the four who were living in another world.

"There's a new thing under the sun," said Bee, as the family settled themselves comfortably for a long evening such as they knew so well how to enjoy. "At least," she amended, "there's a new thing under the Nassau sun. As we were coming home to-night, the longest way 'round' as usual, a woman called out to me—

"'Missus, missus! Missus!! *please* missus, want to buy dis dog!'"

"I pretended not to hear, and at the same time warned Barbara, who turned around to see a miserable, under-grown specimen of a dog with thin legs and shame-faced, yellow countenance. But she was more determined than we were, and she shouted after us, 'Missus, oh, missus, don' you want to buy no dog to-day? He be verra good dog, missus. He make you no trouble. Please buy him, missus.' If he hadn't been so diminutive, I would have bought him for Mother. The woman looked quite disappointed."

"You know I hate dogs," said the Mother, "but I might have given him to the crazy woman. She would only have had six then."

"His dogship evidently did not like my appearance, for when his mistress exclaimed, 'Go long wid dat lady!' he hung his ears and trotted back in spite of the fierce 'You won't, won't you, yo mizzable, yellow dog.'"

"This is the only house in Nassau, I do think, that has no dogs," declared the Mother. "No wonder the people are poor."

"Then we went into a neat little yard to ask for some flowers of the bona nox that grew over a stone wall, and the owner beamed on us when we praised her place. I asked her about the fruit, for she seemed to have a great variety in her yard, and while she climbed over the stones to pull buds, I asked every question I could think of. She must have wondered why I kept writing in my book, but I had a purpose, and so I just asked questions, and wrote as I asked. I'll work it over by and by, but this is the way it reads at present.

"I—'May I have a few of these pretty papaw blossoms?'

"She—'Yes, Missus, yo' could have them kindly, missus,' with a proud smile.

"I gathered a small handful, and she ran to another tree where they were larger, she said, and of a different sort; and came back with every flower.

"'Oh, you shouldn't pick them all!' I said. 'You will have no fruit next year.'

"'It doesn't make no differ 'bout dat, missus. Dis tree he don' bear no fruit. He wrong kind. Dat tree she bear fruit.'

"I—'Do you have many guavas?'



"She—' Oh yes, Missus, in de season. Dis de wrong season for guava. De winter guava gone; de summer guava not come. Dey soon be full, Missus, and I give you some.'

"' Oh,' I said with a sigh, 'I am afraid I shall be far away then, more than a thousand miles from here.'

"' Oh, missus, you stay here all de summer and I give you much fruit. You not go home, you stay in Nassau dis summer.'

"' I wish I could,' I said, 'but I shall have to go very soon, and it is so cold where I live that probably I shall freeze up solid.' "

"How can you say such things, Beatrix?" exclaimed the Mother, "when you know what beautiful weather we sometimes have."

"Sometimes—" said Bee, significantly.

"She delights to fill these poor people with dreadful stories of the United States," remarked Barbara. "Happily they form no idea of ice and snow, so I suppose her conscience is saved."

"The woman looked at me with pitying eyes, and after some apparently deep thought, she brightened a little and said:

"' You come back in Nassau next winter?' and I said I would."

"Is that in your notes?" asked Benita.

"Yes, and in my plans too, unless the health of the family is unusually good. I am going to see if there is a book in the Library on ill health,—rules for it, I mean."

"Health is a blessing, my dear," said the Mother.

"So is a tropical climate," answered Bee.

"Any more notes?" inquired Barbara.

"Yes, quantities, only perhaps I shall not read them all to-night."

"Did you take notes of Aunt Jamaica's queer sayings at all?" asked Barbara.

"I tried to write down what she said the last time we went to market with Lemuel, but I didn't understand more than half; she said so much, and spoke so low. Here is what I have :

"'How do you do?' said I.

"'Well, missus, praise Gawd. I heah dis mawning, but I not so very well,' indicating her lame shoulder : then turning to Lemuel, who stood looking at her, she said severely:

"'Lemuel, when you come up heah, you doan say good-mawnin'. Why doan you say good-mawnin', Lemmy?'

"Receiving no answer, she went on discussing the poor boy's character, regardless of his very uneasy presence.

"'Lemmy use be good boy. He live wid me two years, like my own chile. He keep de pigs, he feed 'em, he chase de fowls, he make de bit fire and cook de grits for me. He verra good boy, Lemmy. He sell de goats, he sell de sheep—'

"'Did you have many?' I ask doubtingly.

"Oh, yes, Missus, a good bit I had. Lemmy never steal, he never doan give me no impudence. But now, dese days,' with a deep sigh as if she were filled with untold sorrows, 'Now he diffunt. He promise give me big coppah to buy bacca; he never

give it. Here, boy,' suddenly calling to a lad about Lemuel's age, who had come up to the stand to purchase a check's worth of dried conchs, 'take dis sixpence of de lady's; go get it change. What you mean standing around whar ladies be without no manna's to you, facin' wite folks!' and, strange to say, the boy immediately marched off to do her bidding, in spite of the injustice of the proceeding. Lemuel still stood by, stolidly listening to the tale of his misdemeanors, exactly as he would have stood if she had been descanting on the demerits of the boy who had left; indeed she proceeded to do so: 'Child'en doan act right nowadays. Dey got no manna's—doan even be willing to go change sixpence for poor old woman who have rheumatics,' after making which extraordinary charge, her meek messenger reappeared with the change. She took it ungraciously, remarking in an injured tone, as she did so, 'You doan bring me no ha'penny, boy, and I be so good to you. Run, now quick, borrow match to light dis pipe, you bad boy.' Thus adjured he started off again, but soon returned empty-handed.

"'Whar dat match?' demanded Aunt Jamaica.

"'I couldn't get nobody to borrow it to me.'

"'You tell lies, you wicked boy!' exclaimed his tormentor in a great rage. 'Where you go when you die?' Go long wid you, stan'in' roun' here wid de ladies, you sassy boy!' and she thrust the dried conchs into his hand, and gave him a push.

"'Lemmy doan act so bad as dat,' she went on. 'He doan steal! Dat is de beauty of a chile, when he doan steal. Lemmy he come of good parents. I

know his fader and moder, his grand-fader and grand-moder, an I never find no fault wid his grand-parents, dey good folks in de gospel ; moder. good, soft person,—fader flog well, when he naughty. Oh, dey bring Lemmy up good ! He hear me when I speaks to him ; used to call me grandma, an he feed de fowls good, but he not like he used to be'—with a shake of the head and a reproachful look at the immovable Lemuel.

“ ‘ I likes,’ with strong emphasis, ‘ I *likes* to look upon childun accordin’ as dey behave, but Lemmy go wid bahd boys.’ Lemuel glanced at us as this dreadful charge fell full upon his ears, but seeing us smile benevolently on the earnest speaker, he relapsed into his former unconsciousness. ‘ He go wid bahd boys, an one corrup’ de oder till dey all corrup’. Now, he forsake me, hardly tell me good-mawnin’. Oh, de boys *all* bad here now. Drinks ! dey drinks !’ with a withering look at a toddler in ebony who had just run up to the stand, though he didn’t look as if he deserved the rebuke—‘ dey all drink ! Get wid bahd boys and drinks ; no *kind* drinks neder,’ she went on after a slow pause—“ Malt, wusky, bahd spirits, but ’—with a softened look at Lemuel, who had not spoken a word, and who looked hardly a text for so lengthy a tirade—“ Lemmy a good boy, *he* never drink ; *he* come from good parents, an’ well brought up, and he live wid me two years. Lemmy good boy, he verra good boy ! ’ ”

“ Poor Lemuel,” said his mistress. “ That was rather a trying occasion for him, but he knows that we trust him.”

"Yes, Aunt Jamaica said that he could be trusted. I forgot to write that.

" 'Lemmy be allus honest,' she said, 'when he live wid me. I trust him wid de shilling. I trust him wid de sixpence. Lemmy never put his hand to nothing not doan belong to him. Once a man at de hotel trust him to carry a whole pound to de sto.' "

"Did he show any more appreciation of the praise than he did of the blame?" asked the Mother.

"Not a bit. He seemed to receive it all as somehow his due, though I don't believe he ever goes with bad boys."

"He says he doesn't, and he never seems to meet any boon companions on our excursions," said Benita. "He always frowns so when he meets any boys, that one would actually think the youth had no comrades."

"Are we going to hear any more notes for the book to-night?" said the Mother.

Benita took up her manuscript and read :

"I had sketched a beautiful vine that covered from top to bottom a high wall, and had been so occupied with my flowers that I had failed to put in the wall itself, which was laid up with stones in a fashion uncommon within the city limits. I did not, however, discover the omission till we were too far on the homeward track to retrace our steps. Then I began to look for a similar wall, with a night blooming cereus growing over it, which plant I fancied would look well in the sketch.

" 'You know what I mean, Lemuel?' I asked, and I began to describe it.

" 'No, mum, I couldn't tell you.'

" 'Have you not seen that one on the smooth wall on Prince Street ?'

" 'No, mum, I never did.'

" 'Why, Lemuel, you have lived here all your life, and you must have gone through that street hundreds of times.'

" 'Yes, mum, but I don't look round at de walls.'

" This seems to be a common trait. The people are observant, but only of *human* nature ; they appear unconscious of the wonderful things around them. I found my own cactus, a stunning specimen, which apparently started among the boughs of a high tree, and thence threw its great arms up and down, spreading over many square feet of wall below. A crowd collected as usual, and I asked one child why she was not in school. Lemuel answered for her : 'She don't go no more, mum; the teacher say she want her to come at ten o'clock.' This seemed all right to me, and I said so, but Lemuel demurred : 'She wouldn't be more dan an hour and a half behine, mum, and the teacher flog her. So her mother say she keep her at home, and flog her herself, mum!' I had already learned that my good Lemuel had no idea of time. One might as well say 'promptly at eight' in a foreign tongue.

" 'You are late, Lemuel,' I would hint mildly at first, and he would reply :

" 'Oh, not more than fifteen minutes, mum.'"

"Letter," called Beatrix, and Barbara obediently read :

MY BELOVED FIVE DOZEN :—Would you were all here this very minute ! Here means on top of Fort

Fincastle. Lemuel feels a special interest in the spot, because he says he sleeps here nights and "h'ists fo' de vessels." He has long wished to elevate his missus to this lofty spot, but Beatrix and I, after reconnoitering, decided that it could not be done. He insisted that it was possible, and so it proved to be, but as we labored up the steep and rocky ascent, one at either wheel and Lemuel in the rear, I could think of nothing but the stony side of Mount Agassiz, the only mountain that I ever climbed; yet this was steeper, for no carriage could have come up this track. We are glad to bring Benita to see it. The outer wall is high, and encloses a plot of ground where roses and jasmines luxuriate, and from deep niches droop great masses of waving ferns, that look exactly as if they had been placed there for decoration. The armament consists of three rusty cannon and two ancient howitzers. Like Fort Charlotte, it is used only as a signal station. Beatrix sits at the top of the second flight of stairs with her face to the setting sun, whom she proposes to "take" just as his rim dips beneath the wave, which will then be all aflame. She is rubbing in her "ground" and clearing her battery of pastels for action. The flag-man has a sort of sentry-box where he keeps his various colors, his glass, and the horn which he winds to relieve the monotony of his days. Surely all persons who are now afflicting their kind with "linked sweetness long drawn out," and particularly those who *will* practice on pianos that shriek for the tuner, ought to be provided with light-houses and lookout stations. We had six weeks of that annoyance here, then some

weeks of silence that soothed us sweetly and prepared us to endure the screaming of two small children who cease not by night or day continually to cry. Nothing is there for the Mother to do but to sit on the signal-man's threshold and contemplate the lovely and wonderful sea. She derives solid satisfaction from looking across the island at five American men-of-war that are lying there at anchor, each with her prow to the east. They are part of the North Atlantic Squadron under Captain Jouett, and they have been at Key West for three years. On their way home to Washington they have called at Nassau "just for a spree," as Lemuel reports. Such an arrival is an event in this quiet place. The five ships are very gay with bunting, and the harbor is full of swift little tugs, rowboats, and other craft. Very soon after the fleet arrived, several officers in great bravery of uniform marched up our street to call upon the Governor. He has probably returned the compliment, for there is an extra commotion, and we have just counted the seventeen guns required for his salute. The consul has been aboard too, for just as we came up we heard seven guns. What conveniences are cannons !

Some time since the Albatross was here for several days. She, also, was an American, and was sailing about in the interests of science. We used to see the naturalists scooping in the harbor, and we met the botanist with full hands as we were walking toward one of our own plant mines.

What a simple thing it would be for the admiral to capture Nassau ! A few well-directed shots would be



enough ; then we would have a cable from Florida and a line of fast steamers from some southern port, for the sake of those who fear the longer passage. We could send all our sick and tired people here to recruit, and to that end we would build many cottages near a large dining-room, for the hotel would not hold all the visitors. I would have cottages to rent, and each cottage should have good beds. I believe that frozen milk might be furnished daily for less than twenty-five cents a quart. I would have a piano-tuner and— But what ambitions am I cherishing? Americanize Nassau, and her charm would be broken. We have enough bustle and whiz and enterprise at home : let this little island retain her simplicity !

As to Benita, who used to look upon a staircase as only inferior to the Matterhorn, nothing satisfies her but to scramble up a third steep pair, and perch herself upon a pile of sawed stone blocks, near the steep end of the fort ; and there she is, painting with might and main. Her supply of proper material to paint upon was exhausted long ago, but she takes paste-board, wood, shells, iron plates, or anything else, till I confidently look forward to a picture-gallery in our lofty attic, with a fee to the general public. I could add some “curos’ties,” and so share in the glory.

I believe I have the best part of this expedition, for I am at liberty to walk about, while the artists are next to immovable. I see the broad, low-lying crest of Fort Charlotte against the sky ; I can see a little pond that bears the aspiring title of Old England ; farther on is the range of the Blue Hills ; in one place

the land dips down upon the southern shore till I can catch the silver gleam of the sea. I am at liberty to admire the distant palms and all the glory of the western skies ; but all these things will soon be taken away, for the signals are coming down on both forts, and we have whistled for our "propeller," as Trixy has dubbed Lemuel.

Benita prophesied that we should arrive at the bottom in one undistinguishable mass, but the descent was not very difficult. We brought home bunches of lovely pale-pink oleander, spikes of the fragrant squill-lily and a "bell-flower." This latter grows upon a haycock-shaped bush, eight feet high, and the bush is hung all over with white flowers of the same shape and size of the bells that we used to hang in the ceiling above our lamps. It is a datura of some kind, and the odor of one blossom is sufficient for our drawing-room.

All this time I have not alluded to the ceiba, or silk-cotton tree, which has been planted in many places in and about Nassau. The largest stands in the rear of the Court House, and has a spread of ninety feet in one direction and one hundred and sixteen in another. It is as high as the building, but is low in comparison with its breadth. Its huge trunk is buttressed up for ten feet with thin gray braces that make a number of stall-shaped places about the tree. When we came, there was a comical bareness about its huge bulk ; not a leaf fluttered upon the great, crooked, spine-covered branches ; but there were a great many pods about the size of those on the milkweed, which we supposed contained seeds ; sud-

denly the century-old mammoth was covered with spikes of salmon-pink flowers, that reminded us a little of the pink horse-chestnut. It seemed only a few days after, that we found the tree in a garment of beautiful leaves that add much to its size and largely to its beauty ; they are palmate, like the hemp. And now, as we linger, the seeds have ripened, the pods are opening, and the soft gray silk cotton is flying on the air.

A bright little friend of Lemuel proposes to go to New York on the next steamer. In a "fuss" with a white boy, W. J. was so unfortunate as to "broke his jaw," if I may trust my informant, who said further, "An dot's de way dey mos'ly does, mum. Dey does a crime, and quits." I frankly confess that I feel exactly like doing a crime, and this is how I am tempted. We go over to Hog Island frequently, where from the dry dock and marine railway it is but three minutes' walk across to the north shore and the high-flying surf. I wish you could see the luxuriance of a dark-red passion-flower that is such a profuse bloomer that its branches seem fairly crowded. On the island are many cocoanut palms of different ages ; on some, the grape-like clusters of nuts hang within reach. These and other trees are heavily mulched with refuse sponges, for the cocoanut flourishes in proportion to its water supply. We have often wondered why the boatmen kept so close to their boat. It fell out that they stood in fear of the yellow dog, Pompey, who is always on the scene, ready and eager to bite a black person. We had not loved that dog ourselves, for he interfered with our quiet avocations, though not going

so far as to bite us. The other day we took the artist, and Lemuel to propel her across. We walked over by the side of the chair, and were unmolested by the dog, though he winked at us rather viciously. He would not allow Bee to sit on the bank with her crayons, and I was not permitted to walk on the sandy beach. He even tore my dress with his sharp claws, and that is a calamity, for I have no time to "collect rents," and here all mending looks to me like a waste of time. Of course, his brute strength was not to be resisted, and I felt deep resentment as we walked back to the dock. Pompey trotted quietly in our wake for a few minutes, then he went up to Lemuel just as quietly, left the marks of four cruel teeth upon an ebony calf, and innocently trotted on, as if nothing had happened. Lemuel gave one surprised howl of rage and pain, then limped along in patient silence, because he is used to it, he says. "Most dogs does it." There are far too many of them here, who "fly out when you don't mash 'em either, mum."

When we first came to Nassau, our seniors were much averse to boating, and whenever we went out for a quiet row, they were in the way of making very touching remarks to us. They are now so far reconstructed as to be eager for aquatic excursions. Last evening we went out in the Brizo, a boat saved from the wreck of an English brigantine not long since. We were just opposite "Little Potter's Key" when clouds overspread the heavens and drops of rain fell. I reproached the captain, who had promised us a clear sky.

"Oh, dot's jes a little spill, mum, frum de tr—ats passin' ovah."

"Trumpets, did you say?"

"No, mum; de tr—"

"Tophet—trophet—What *is* that queer word?"

"Truffet, mum, truffet."

"Oh, truffet. And what does truffet mean?"

"I cahn't tell you, mum. God made it, an' I met up wid it wen I fust come in de worl'."

Little Potter's Key is but a dumpling of an island, but its black-rimmed rock is running over with life. There grows the button-bush, "designed fah burnin'"; "gum-alumy wat you plahnt at a fren's grave, an you'll al'ays fin' it by dat bush"; the seven year apple, which some of us think is the most wholly delightful of all our flowers—its fruit only ripens once in seven years, they say—bay cedar, "good fah sore troat and sore mout"; and a gorgeous red flower that covers a good-sized shrub with large clusters of wonderful beauty. Alas, it is nameless to us, for we have no Botany of the tropics.

"I suppose you were here in the last hurricane?"  
(1866) I said to the captain.

"Oh yes, missus, right out in it, and de tin roofs flyin an' de win' a-blowin', an I jes duck my head an' run."

"Weren't you afraid?"

"Oh no, missus! I jes put my trus' in God above," jerking his thumb up with a comical gesture, "an' I jes *run*."

Although I know that trust in God should be the constant attitude of one's mind, I still suggested that Johnson would have been safer in-doors.

"No'm, I don' think so, missus. If a mon's time ain expire, he safe anywere, no matter wat happen ; but if a mon's time *is* expire, if he in iron box, he not safe. He boun' to heah de voice. an' he *got* to go."

The "spill" was not alarming ; we scrambled ashore, and secured creditable sketches, then rowed back through the splendors of an indescribable sunset that the Mother insisted has no counterpart only in "the sea of glass mingled with fire" in the Revelation. It has taken strong hold of her, and to-day she often ejaculates, "That sea of glass,—that wonderful sea !"

As we came along Bay Street last night a woman said to the Mater, "You don' wan no chile to take to de States wid you, missus ?" Another asked Benita if she didn't want a nurse for her "Ma." Fancy the Mother, with all her spryness and independence, handed over to a nurse ! Nurses often volunteer for Nita, and Aunt Peace avers that she would wear off her feet for the Mother, "she looks so like my good ole missus gone to Gawd."

I believe Lemuel is a monomaniac on the subject of boots and shoes, for he has had a pair of each since we have been here, also a pair of slippers, and yet the youth has not been shod one day in seven. He is always looking at shoes in shops, and if any rubbers are in the veranda, he inspects them carefully, and sometimes wants to buy them. Last Saturday he gave seventy-two cents for a pair of queer English rubbers that have checked cloth tops and are laced. He looked smart enough on Sunday ; the cloth showed signs of stony grief on Monday ; the rubbers

yawned on Tuesday ; on Wednesday they were sewed up with a fine disregard of looks, by stitches evidently meant to last, for they were made with stout white wrapping-twine. Even this did not avail, for on Saturday the boy was again barefoot. How I long for the footgear that we have abandoned to the flames, for even the soles would be invaluable here in the lanes of the suburbs. Oh, for a rummage in the attic of some modern St. Cecilia after her eleven thousand have gone back to the boarding-schools ! Their cast-off raiment would clothe most amply the colored women of Nassau. Beatrix was at the window one day, and a tall girl interviewed her from the street.

“ Please, missus, gi’ me pair old boots.”

“ I have no old boots.”

“ Please, missus, gi’ me pair ole slippers.”

“ I have no slippers.”

“ Please, missus, gi’ me ole apern.”

“ I have no old apron.”

“ Please, missus, gi’ me finger-ring.”

“ I don’t understand you.”

“ Wy, a ring to wear on my fingah, missus.”

She already wore four rings, a pair of green glass earrings, and a large brass pin, which seemed a full supply, if one considers the climate. I suppose I have done undreamed-of mischief by bestowing a pair of old slippers upon the damsel, for all Africa seemed to be aware of the fact, and has jumped to the conclusion that we are overrun with slippers and shoes.

There are very few street-cries. Occasionally a woman calls out, “ Parchy groun’ ! ” and we buy some

very small and very dear peanuts. We were startled to hear the cry of "Fresh comb," one day, and of course we ran to the door to prospect. It was a woman with a large platter of white honey made from orange-blossoms. Two cents' worth was enough for two teas, since none of us are fond of this form of sweetness. Imagine the flavor of such honey, for the orange-flowers were very evident. One person informed us that bees spent the summer in Andros, returning here each winter ; another said that they only went back into the bush, so we don't know what to believe, except that it must be a Nassau bee's nature to manufacture honey ; he certainly has food in abundance, the whole year around, and has no need to improve each or any shining hour.

We have been to prison, Beatrix, and I ; and of all the prisons on earth, may we be sent to this in Nassau if we are ever condemned to serve for broken laws. On the highest point in the city stands this clean, cool, airy, high stone building, a model of what a prison should be. The Inspector, who is also the Postmaster and likewise fills divers and sundry other offices, seems to have reduced everything to the most beautiful order and precision. We sat in the office while a fresh batch of offenders were brought before the Inspector to be officially received and lectured. We saw that very imperative directions were given by their escort as to how they must hold their hands, salute, "curchy," etc. Next we saw the forty-two prisoners, all colored, who were receiving their morning inspection and taking their orders for work. Felonious culprits were dressed in white duck, and



those guilty of misdemeanor wore parti-colored suits of blue and white. Then we saw the light cells and dark cells, the kitchen, storeroom, schoolroom, and—what I had long pined to behold—two nine-tailed cats. I was glad to know that they were used only at long intervals and in very exceptional cases. My Almanack says that the daily cost of each prisoner is  $4\frac{3}{4}$  pence, and the daily cost, including all expenses, of the prison is  $1s. 13\frac{3}{4}d.$ ; but it seems to us that  $11d.$  a day was the sum named by the Inspector, who ought to know. We wonder how this small sum compares with our prison outlays. Of course, there is no expense for heating, and a man can wear the same kind of clothing for a twelvemonth. Food, too, is less of an item. These prisoners are a reserve working-force, turned on whenever needed. Does Mrs. Blake give a large dinner-party, then we see the prisoners carrying tables and chairs into the Government House, and taking them away next morning. These useful men make new roads, repair them, clean the drains, keep all the public grounds in order, and weed the streets. They also set out shade-trees, and make themselves known in many capacities. Opposite the Military Barracks is Fleeming Square, used for a drill-ground, for ball-play, and kindred purposes. To-day we saw a squad of prisoners sitting, kneeling, stooping, and squatting there, each armed with a heavy Spanish machéte (which is commonly called mashet), eighteen inches long. They were laboriously cutting off the sparse and sickly-looking grass. I sometimes long for the lovely emerald-green of our velvet lawn in contrast with such scanty, wiry, olive-

green herbage, and yet I cannot bear to leave this enchanted climate, and these new and lovely flowers that are such a constant delight. By the way, I believe that grass would grow here if it were encouraged. If I were His Excellency, not a spoonful of guano should leave this colony, and if I owned a garden I would stir the soil occasionally, instead of everlastingly pouring on water, as is the invariable custom. Fierce and jealous care would I take of every falling leaf and of all refuse; then would the earth redouble her favors. Next time I come I am going to bring all sorts of grass and clover seed, and see what is possible.

Those of you who have read Mr. Drysdale's book will wonder why you have heard nothing of Waterloo and its wonderful lake of fire. Of course we meant to go, but time ran on, Mr. D. locked up and sailed away, and we were still outside. Through the kindness of a gentleman, whose courtesy to many a pilgrim and stranger has made his name familiar and his memory green, matters were satisfactorily arranged, and on a certain memorable night we drove out to the Mecca of our desires. The care-taker met us at the gate with a lantern, and guided us down the rocky path to the artificial lake which has been constructed by some former resident for the storage of fish and green turtle. "The lake is nearly a thousand feet long, and from two to three hundred broad," writes the present owner, "with a depth of four or five feet." We looked at the dark surface, for the night was not as guiltless of light as we could wish, and it seemed to us that a faint bluish haze hovered

over it. It was doubtless a fancy, but there was no illusion about the trails of silver that followed every darting fish. The man rowed us over the lake, and described curves, and circles, and fantastic shapes of fire with his oars. A small diver gamboled about beneath and beside our boat, like a weird uncanny monster clad in a shapeless robe of phosphorescence. A stone thrown in with proper force produced a fiery fountain, but to us it seemed most wonderful when we took the water in our own hands, and let it sparkle down; each tiniest drop was all alive with wonderful light. It was like playing with quicksilver, except that this enchanted water was molten gold instead. A short canal connect this lake with the ocean, and it is said that the water may be changed continually without affecting its phosphorescence, while that quality is entirely lacking in the neighboring ocean water.

We are packing our corals and our shells,—slow and particular work, I can assure you, to make secure these frail beauties; but it will come to an end some day, as will our sojourn in this delightful land.

A naturalist, who had greatly enjoyed a short stay in Jamaica, wrote that he never expected to repeat that pleasure in this life, but he did hope and expect that in the life to come he would be permitted to return, and again delight in that wonderfully beautiful isle. A fellow-feeling stirs in our hearts; but is it impossible for us to come again to Nassau? Let us all come together next time, dear friends.

“ You ought to say, in speaking of the *Albatross*,

that the report of their soundings was of interest to us Americans," said Benita.

"How?" inquired Bee.

"The paper stated that a coral reef had been found extending from New Providence to Key West, proving that once upon a time they were one and the same. I believe that was about the gist of the matter, though I have lost the paper."

"But when you write about shells again," said the Mother, addressing her remarks to no one in particular, "be sure to relate my labors in manufacturing small paper boxes for the fine varieties. I think my work is worthy of a place in the book, for I have spent hours cutting pasteboard and old diary covers and everything I could lay my hands on—and look at them." She held up a half-dozen tiny boxes as she spoke.

"What lovely things they are—the shells, I mean, not the boxes," said Bee. "I never tire of looking at them,—the tiny rice-shells, polished and perfect in shape, the 'rising sun,' so well named. Do you know that some of them are pure white? I don't think they are as pretty as the pink ones, but it makes variety."

"Are you obliged to have a separate box for each kind?" asked Barbara.

"I will make her all the boxes she needs," indulgently remarked the Mother.

"Think of a place the size of Nassau where you can't even buy a small sheet of cardboard," said Benita.

"Have you specimens of each of the five hundred kinds found here?" asked Barbara.

"I have more to read," said Benita, "if you want it this evening, or I can wait until next time."

"Let's hear it now. You know we can't have many more next times of this kind. Oh, why should we go away? why not stay right on?" said Beatrix. "Why are we going home anyway? I can't see the necessity."

"We are going home to have the book published," replied Benita.

"The manuscript will go from here to New York as well," replied Bee; "and where is there a better place to read and correct proof?"

"Wouldn't it be better to go, and come again, Beatrix?" said the Mother.

"But *shall* we come again?"

"Oh, I hope so, if we are all well."

"If life's speered," added Beatrix, recovering from her depression.

"I thought we were going to have more of Benita's notes," said the Mother.

"To be sure. I forgot all about it," said Benita, who read as follows:

The ostensible object of my morning ride—or my drive—was a call on Lemuel's mother; but I had with me a few colors, and an iron plate from a wreck, which was about the only thing on the island that could be pressed into service for a sketch, and a very handy thing it was, allowing itself to be turned upside down on my board while wet, and wrapped up securely in my painting-apron for the journey home. I stopped at the head of Frederick Street for a good long look

at the lovely view. Lemuel sat down in the road, and the kind people living in the nearest house sent out to offer me facilities for my work. I was nearly on the crest of the hill, and the solitude, so near the heart of the city, gave me a strange sensation. Several times a man tried to urge his donkey up the declivity, and the gayly dressed soldiers at the Commissariat below came out of their gates to see what was being done; but the beast of burden invariably carried his point, and finally vanished down a side street. Occasionally a girl with a note, or a man with flowers for the hotel came up, and stopped to compare my sketch with the inimitable stretch of the sea and sky; but nothing disturbed my delightful quietude until a cow appeared.

"Dey drives the cows up here, missus," Lemuel explained to me, "so dey not gets mixed wid de people." It was a *lapsus linguæ* on Lemuel's part, however, to call the operation driving, for the animal had a rope fastened to her horns and dangling on the ground. Two men pulled her by this, and another used the end of the rope to belabor her from behind. It was the work of several minutes to move her a step; another man came up, and added a few promiscuous blows with a board he carried. They forced her past me, but I feared she might turn, and looked around for my trusty henchman.

"What an acting cow, Lemuel!"

"Yes, mum; dey'll get de better of her, mum."

"See if you cannot help them, Lemuel. I shall not feel safe till she is out of sight."

So Lemuel added his strength, vigorously pushing

the cow behind, but it was fully half an hour before he returned, panting.

"I never saw such a cow?" I exclaimed.

"Doesn't de cows do so in de States, mum?"

I tried to give Lemuel a glimpse of the herds of cattle I had seen in that Eldorado of his fancy; but since he had not seen a dozen cows together, and never a toothsome blade of grass to make them good-tempered, I gave it up, and we pursued our journey down the slope of the hill. Far over in Grant's Town Lemuel turned me around an unfamiliar corner.

"Here is where my mother stop, mum."

"In this house?"

"No, mum; jes round here."

We went on and on, from one lane to another, and each narrower than the last, till I could almost touch the walls on either side. The street also grew rougher, till there was not a foot of level rock to be seen anywhere, and I grew alarmed for the safety of my chair, to say nothing of myself. If anything should give out here, I might as well be in a wilderness. I asked Lemuel how far it was now, and he replied, "Jes here, mum," but whether he meant anywhere within half a mile I could not determine. Suddenly, from behind a cluster of trees peeped a cottage. The orange, sapodilla, pawpaw, and mango almost hid it, and all were loaded with fruit. Lemuel had reported his mother's age as twenty-six, and to my surprise she confirmed his figures, while "putting" Lemuel's sister, as he himself did, at seventeen. This art of "putting things," by the way, was one of his accomplishments.

"What is going on to-night at Church Hill?" I would say.

"Jest church, missus."

"But it is Monday night, and these all seem to be children."

"Well, I put it at church, mum."

So now I showed no surprise, but merely asked his grandmother's age.

"I couldn't tell you, missus, widout going to de church record."

The little house had two rooms, with a bed in each. I had to crowd past one to reach the grandmother, seated comfortably before her washtub, her soap and starch on a little table at her elbow. The whole apparatus, herself included, took up less room than a modern sewing-machine. Lemuel's mother was a sad-looking woman, but showed all her son's reticence. Her face lighted up when I praised her boy, who had had to "find himself," she told me, for several years.

"Lemmy good to me. I feel bad to let him go, but I not keep him if he find a place. The men here all so bad, missis."

"You think the men are all bad, Lemuel?" I said when we were on the road again, and my fears had been relieved by finding a new and better way home.

"Yes, mum, it is. You see that man there, talking so loud, missis? That's a Conchy Joe. They all bad."

"What is a Conchy Joe, Lemuel?"

"The people from the Out Islands, mum,"

"The white people?"



"They say so, mum; but they not have clean hands, mum. I can tell an Englishman from a Conchy Joe, and an American from both, mum."

"Lemuel, I have heard that the whiter your people are, the more sense they have. Do you believe that?"

"Yes, mum," replied the impartial youth. "Yes, mum, it is, mum."

All this time I had noticed Lemuel furtively glancing behind us at intervals, and after we had turned the corner, and were mounting the hill toward the prison, he would occasionally leave me in the middle of the road, and step to one side for that purpose. We asked for the key, and went into the prison "gardens" a large, neglected yard of trees and shrubs, where I enjoyed the stillness and the view, and Lemuel pulled quantities of beautiful wild lilies for me. When we came out, he renewed his observations. Suddenly he broke out,—

"That dog that bit me on the Island, mum, I'll take it out o' some other dog some day."

I advised him to go armed with a stick.

"No, mum," growing excited, "dey doan care nothin' 'bout a stick. A edge-tool is the best thing."

"An edge-tool?"

"Yes, that's the best thing for 'em."

"What kind of an edged tool?"

"Why, like what you give me de oder day."

"That little penknife with a broken blade, Lemuel? You couldn't hurt a dog with that."

"Oh yes, mum; jes' stick him in de stummick."

I remonstrated with him against attempting to

commit murder with the "edge-tool," representing that he could not succeed and would bring down the vengeance of the law upon his head. He said nothing, but made a compromise on small "rocks," with which he filled his pockets. After all, when the threatened dog came at last, accompanied by his master, he paid no attention to Lemuel, and the boy was equally indifferent till his general enemy was far in the distance, when he discharged all the "rocks" after him, to his own apparent relief.

## XX.

### LAST PARADISE DAYS.—NORTHWARD HO.

NASSAU, May 10.

DEAR PEOPLE OF MINE: Celebrities are privileged to make countless last appearances, and may not I, though a very private individual, have the privilege of another last letter? True, I shall be obliged to take these final last words along with me, and post them in New York; but how else can you know of our winding up, or our running down rather, which I am sure will be full of incident? If we try to tell you these things at home, I fear the local coloring will be lacking.

Only two weeks more in

“this sceptered isle,

“This other Eden, demi-Paradise.”

Suppose that Shakspeare like us had feasted on

“The luscious fruits which of their own accord  
The willing ground and laden trees afford,”

what would he not have written?

When we came from market last Saturday morning, and looked at our piles of fruit, I felt a little anxious, for there were fourteen kinds and seventy pieces. There were oranges, a watermelon, a lemon, an egg-fruit, a pomegranate, a mamee, mangoes, bananas,

a soursop, and tamarinds ; yet I must say that none of this fruit was wasted. Not long since I amazed the family by buying eighty-two sapodillas at once ; for once in the history of Nassau, a person wanted to dispose of a basketful together, and they only cost fourteen cents.

St. Agnes has just had its yearly picnic. A procession, headed by a feeble band, formed at the church, marched up to the door of the Governmental Mansion, were harangued by H. E., who stood on the steps with his children, then moved on to the garden of the Agricultural Society, which is not a garden at all,—just an open field with a few trees around its edges. On the trees were hung flags of all sorts, pieces of red, yellow, and blue cloth, and pennants, which must be public property we think, for they add their charms to every out-door gathering. The revelers were seated on wooden benches formed into a hollow square, where they partook of their sapodillas, pound-cake, and ice-cream. The Bishop and all the resident clergy were there, and many of the white aristocracy. The boys played ball ; when the band played there was a little mild dancing, but the hilarity was exceedingly moderate, and I think it consisted largely in the wearing of Sunday suits.

“ How is it,” I said to Lemuel, “ that your people dress so well on Sundays when they are so ragged on week-days ? ”

“ Oh, they pinch they stomachs, mum ; they goes without they vittles.”

There was a concert at Bethel's Baptist Church for the laudable object of reshingling the roof. Of

course we went. We asked for reserved seats, and the usher piloted us to the exclusive portion, and with a majestic wave of both hands he said in tragic tones, "Take any seat you like,—any seat." Large flags were arranged as a curtain before the stage, and when the bell rang and they were withdrawn, there sat fifty young men and maidens in festal array, all grave and proper, I can assure you. The "ladies," except three, wore white dresses, mostly over pink, with much flouncing and lace and many ribbons. They were just as large clusters of roses as white girls would ; they had roses and ribbons in their hair ; they carried roses in their hands. The "gentlemen " wore black broadcloth, white vests, white ties, and white gloves ; and all were as black as jet, even the leader, who stood in a depression at the front of the stage. He had something like a small croquet mallet with which he gave the signals for standing and for sitting ; he started each number, and his chorus joined him with their full volume on the third note. The music was of a simple order. A piece was announced to be sung by the five foolish virgins ; one of them was a half-grown boy and one was a man ; and it was about the same thing when the wise virgins appeared. There was a quartette and a chorus, assisted by a cornet and a bass horn. They started off on two or three different keys, with the leader fidgeting and frowning all the time. At the end of the verse he rapped them down, but for some reason or other the cornet went on, and the singers struggled to do their best. The leader raged. "I wish to make some few remarks," he said. "The fault is in the cornet, and if he wants to

make hisself 'shamed, he shan't make *me* 'shamed. They's them in this crowd that knows wot music is, and they knows where the fault is. Now begin again. The key is D *below* the line."

The discords were even worse than before, and in a great fury the leader threw down his mallet, ran and seized the bass-horn, blew on it till his eyes nearly popped out of his head, but the noises were still worse. Then he came back to his stand as mild as possible, and blandly explained, "Frien's, I shall have to say that the fault's in the instruments, and I'm very sorry. It was the most beautifullest piece we had on the programme, and they don't sing it as good as they practiced it."

The cornet went off in high dudgeon, and the singing continued interspersed with recitations,—mild little verses suitable for a small child being given by grown-ups. Ah, how proper and good everything was! And how we wished that Providence had seen fit to give ordinary white people the gift of song!

That Lemuel is the spice of our lives. We sent him over to the Library the other day with the five books that any ticket-holder may draw at once, and he was gone three hours. This was decidedly inconvenient, as Benita wanted to go out for a sketch, so I met him very gravely, and ascertained that he had been listening to a trial. I tried to impress upon his mind the fact that if he ever reached New York—the goal of his desires—he would be ruined if he couldn't keep up to time. I worked upon his feelings in respect to his mistress—that is, I tried to, but he calmly said: "We'll let the picture stahnd ovah till to-mor-

row, mum." Yesterday he asked for the balance of his wages, which we had prevailed upon him to leave in our keeping, and what do you suppose he wanted to buy? A piece of broadcloth, because he says he is going on the *Santiago* when we depart. Poor Lemuel, I fear he counts his chickens without even the possession of an eggshell!

We started off on an expedition the other morning at 7:15. The livery-man said he would over-feed Charley the night before so as to have him in good trim, but alas for Charley! he seemed to have lost his ambition, and we were not able to get up a trot very often. So we had to console ourselves with the new flowers that we found in profusion. Thunbergias grew by the roadside; strange sedges were there; a fourth variety of passion-flower; Flora's paint-brush; the asclepias tuberosa grew between the wagon-tracks; over a rough gray wall hung a new unknown, with waxy, myrtle-green leaves, and dark-scarlet tubular flowers, something like the coral morning-glory. We labored on past Jericho and up to the first elevation of the Blue Hill Range, when Charles announced his intention of going no further. Discretion led our inclinations to coincide with his, but we made a lengthy détour to a pineapple grove, where the apples are now nearly ripe. The plants are growing in what we should consider a pretty hard-looking spot, planted helter-skelter, just where there is room between the stones. Then we came home on the shore road. We gathered palmetto-leaves to take home. With much exertion I hacked off the flowering stem of a yucca that stood six feet high among its stiff, saw-edged

leaves. It bore hundreds of fragrant, creamy bells, and it weighed four pounds. Charley proved to be a pachyderm of the pachyderms, and all we could do was to sit on the edge of the seat and lean forward, and hold our breath. All the animals here seem uncommonly vicious. It takes five men and two ropes to steer a cow, and then the process is dangerous. Goats are stubborn. Dogs are not amiable. Pigs squeal and quarrel. Cocks crow at all seasons. There are almost no cats. Parrots whistle and laugh continually. I haven't yet seen a snake, though snakes are not unknown. There are long lizards that dart across one's path and suggest the dreaded foe ; there are land-crabs that march all over the country ; there are long, square-ended snail-shells up and down the bushes ; and there are two kinds of mosquitoes, one of which renders no service but that of song. By some curious instinct he is attracted by turns to each of a mortal's two ears ; while the second says little, but deposits his favors in patches which you never know are affected till he has departed for pastures new. Then you might fancy you were dealing with a circumscribed urticaria. At night you can protect yourself by a canopy of bobinet lace ; in the daytime, there is pennyroyal oil. Some places on the shore are infested by fleas. The cockroach—a veritable behemoth—rarely ventures into the house, but if he accidentally enters, and dances on a newspaper in the night watches, you will not lightly hearken to his offense. Thus do I dispose of the animal question, and I hope it is satisfactory to my questioners.

The gooseberry trees have ripened their fruit, and



we have secured some tiny cans of them and also of the scarlet cherries. The gooseberries look like a very large and ripe nasturtium seed, and the cherries have really three little stones. The scarlet hog-plum is full of fruit, but there are no leaves yet, and I always feel as if some calamity had befallen the tree that it is left in such a sorry plight. I would give much to see the ripened plums, and I long for the custard-apple and the alligator "peer"—I long to stay a twelvemonth, and take all this Eden has to give.

What is the prettiest flower, Mrs. B——? Our first love was the yellow elder,—the first flower that we saw from the *Nassau* as we neared the islands before landing. It is a shrub, anywhere from two to ten feet in height, with leaves that resemble our common elder, but the flowers are a bright sulphur-yellow, occurring in large clusters. Each flower is of the shape and size of the *Mimulus*. We admire the yellow and the red Barbadoes' Pride; we love the bell-flower and the corallea. Always are we smitten by one serene white flower that drapes the gray walls of Grant's Town; nor less do we like the lovely wild coffee. For effectiveness, commend us to the glorious, flamboyant poinciana, "monkey's fiddle," and the "thunder-and-lightning," the two latter being *Erythrinæ*. But there are all the lilies, the solanum, the petreas, the bouganvilleas, the jasmines and the roses, the seven-year apple, and the Christmas vine, which has obligingly sent a forerunner that we may judge of its beauty. And the night-blooming cereus has also given us a view of its splendors. Rev.

Mr. D—— brought two for us to enjoy last evening—great white beauties ten inches in diameter, with an inner crown of golden stamens and a halo of red brown sepals. Oh, the fragrance of them! Our artistic twain set to work with oils and crayons, trying to fix the lineaments of the royal pair for future enjoyment. They were gone at midnight. Lemuel says that in the summer the boys put lighted candle-ends in these flowers, and go stalking through the streets with one in each hand,—the Nassau jack-o'-lantern, I suppose. After all, I think we have loved the roses best, for they have been so perfect and so abundant. From our tiny place we have had five thousand in these four months, and large bouquets of exquisite roses are constantly brought to us besides. It takes nearly an hour every morning to arrange our vases. We often recall the ancient Roman luxury of a dining-room strewn with roses, nor do we speak with a particle of envy.

Last Sunday we heard a pastor thank God for "cold and heat, summer and winter, and the recurrence of the seasons." It sounded ludicrous to us, for the extremes of the temperature are about 60° and 90° Fahrenheit, not as hot as any part of the United States in summer, you see; and where is the cold and the winter? Our thermometer is in the eighties now; the policemen wear white linen uniforms, and we look forward to the doffing of muslins and the donning of our sea-going suits with no pleasurable feelings. In the mean time, we solace ourselves with mixed liqueurs—oranges, limes, grape-fruit, pineapples, tamarinds, etc., forming their harmless bases, with the sweet,

sparkling water of the cocoanut and the deliciousness of the soursop. You criticise that latter name, and we agree, as has been said already in this history, that ambrosia or nectar *would* be more fitting. Cora brings us perfectly cooked dinners, and we are packing our treasures and labeling them, in order to save time in that land where time is money, and scarcer than even money is in this small city.

May 22.

This morning Beatrix and I started off early, with Charles plus a driver, for Lake Cunningham or Lake Killarney, Nobody seems to know which is which, or where to go, or how far it is ; even well-to-do people who have lived here more than twenty years never have seen either lake. I am inclined to believe that we beheld the former, and it was luxury to see some one else speeding the equine, who really did very well indeed. We were happy as ever on the hard road by the sea. We had our usual little halt at a favorable bit of beach where drifts of rare shells always await our gathering; then we struck off inland, thinking afresh of that ancient lore which tells us how Ceres gave Proserpine the power to leave a flowering plant wherever she set her flying feet. It seemed to us that she must have left no spot untouched upon our beloved island. What else can explain the luxuriance and the abundance? And again we found new wonders. There was a vine with beautiful white flowers festooning a wall, and not ten feet away was that same vine getting its living as a shrub, because, forsooth, there was nothing to support it. Two of you

can ponder on that if you like, and fit it into sermon or song.

This lake appeared to us as an oblong of pale-blue water, with mangroves fringing its shores, and mangrove islands around near the edges. This curious tree grows on stilts ; it has white flowers in clusters, followed by a dark-green, cigar-shaped fruit with a bulbous extremity. This fruit drops into the water, drifts about till it lodges, sends down roots as red as red coral, and begins to make an island. We captured some floaters, and we intend to raise islands in our greenhouse along with other West Indian curiosities. We found air-plants and orchids innumerable, and we were almost frightened at a singular tree that turned out to be a mammoth fern. Actually, a cold shiver ran through my marrow when I saw the young fronds upcurled among the brown stems upon which I found well-grown thorns. Was there ever such a mixed-up land, such a land of contradictions and anomalies ? Harris piled the carriage so full that when Benita saw us approaching she cried out, "Birnam Wood has really come to Dunsinane !"

Last Sunday we went to a Methodist Chapel, and after that to a class-meeting in a little cottage near by. Aunt Peace was our guide. She wore a blue muslin dress that was thin enough to show the embroidery and tucks of her white petticoat, a large white apron, and an untrimmed palmetto hat over her gray turban. She had some adorning in the way of finger-rings, but she was barefoot. We went into a tidy room, well supplied with chairs and benches, into which about a dozen women and girls filed very solemnly. I think

you would have been surprised at the manner and the words of those poor souls. Each one rose, dropped a "curchy" to the leader, and made a few remarks; usually was "thankful to be on prayin' groun's an' pleadin' terms"; alluded to the trials she had "met up with endurin' de week," remained standing while the leader addressed her at length; then, with another salute, she resumed her seat. As usual we were prayed for fervently, and the leader said, "It is a day long to be remembered when these so far above us should condescend to come into our little midst." Aunt Peace said that after we had gone "everybody cried, an' de leadah she pray, an' we all pray dat Chris' go wi' you, an' take you safe. An' we pray all de time you on de sea. O my missy, my missy!" Ever since this meeting we have been followed and blessed by the colored people, with blessings enough to last us down to old age. If ever there was a field for missionary work, it is right among these affectionate, thriftless, poverty-stricken negroes. Perhaps the Nassauese are doing something for their elevation, but we have failed to discover any lay effort.

Nita has been over to sketch St. Agnes to-day, and Watkins, who interviews us regularly each morning to know the state of our mind regarding a boat for the evening, we being the last leaf on the tree and so doubly valuable, sounded her as to rowing to Athol Island. She asked how long it would take, and he, knowing our minds as to sunsets, replied:

"Well, missus, I couldn't averige up de sunset; but excludin' of de sunset, it would prob'ly take 'bout an hour."

"I suppose there's nothing on the island worth seeing, is there?"

"Oh, yes, missus; dere's all de interior wilde'ness o' de trees an' houses." He stood looking silently at her sketch awhile, then broke out, "Now I get a disposition of it, missus"; then turning to a boy of twelve, who seemed equally interested, he said:

"Now, you chile, you go home to you bed an' you mothah. Wot's de use you stayin' heah? You don' get no good, an' you stan' heah all night. It's all blin'fol' to you." Then, changing from the severity that all these people like to assume at times, he remarked:

"Yes'm, that's a very fine picture, missus, but I ain't seen the photographt yet 'at you painted from my boat."

This same man interviewed me not long ago in regard to taking our baggage to the dock on the 31st. I told him that I promised the job to the man who moved us from the hotel on the 2d of February. He insisted that I ought to give him the job, saying that the other man had probably forgotten all about it; but I have noticed that these people are as tenacious as anybody in a bargain, and I knew that somewhere in New Providence a tall Ethiopian was keeping his eye on our comings and especially on our goings.

"You might gi' me the job, missus; I you' boat-man," he went on persuasively; "took you de salt seas ovah an' guarded you, an' he's a wealthier man dan wot I be anyhow, an' he don' need it so much, missus."

The idea of wealth, especially among the negroes, was so new to me that I led off with more questions, eliciting the fact that Watkins had a wife and two children, and that he had house-rent to pay, which he evidently thought was a great trial, if only a dollar and a half a month.

"Didn't he fetch you' trunks on a mule, missus?"

"He brought them *behind* a mule," I said.

"Well, missus, a man wot own a mule he wealthier dan I be, an' you ought to gi' me the job. I carry you' trunks on a handcart, missus, an' it don' jar 'em so much as a dray, an' I guard 'em till dey goes on de *Nassau*."

It struck me that the short trip over the smooth road to the dock was little to be compared to the rolling of the ship, the encounter with baggage-men at New York, and the ten hours of pitching that would follow later; but I dismissed him with the promise of the second chance.

Watkins has some humor, but old Aunt Maria has the most of any I have met. She holds herself quite aloof from those of her own color, and doubtless has hidden griefs within her dusky bosom. She is more intelligent than most of her race, and told me once how her father took her away to Jamaica when she was small, and there she was "brought up proper." When she returned to Nassau she was much disgusted with her people; as she expressed it, "I couldn't go 'em nohow"; then she went on to say, "But you stay here tree mont's wid 'em, missus, you get jes' pollutious as dey." Perhaps that is true in general, but I think her integrity is secure. She

once told me how a gentleman engaged her to bring him fresh mangoes for some one going on the steamer. "I come down in de mawnin', I look ovah to de 'bah. I see dey telegrafted fum de 'bah no vessel go out, no vessel come in. I go home. De vessel go roun' souf an' de frien' go off, but I not know dat, missy. Nex' day I bring my mangoes, an' he say, 'O Maria, you pooh, confijus woman. I sorry you brought de mangoes, but I buy dem.' An' I say, 'No, sir, I not take no money. I not so destute as dat.' His face get red like rose wen I say dat, his hairt so full. I hadn't de hairt to take money fum dat man, Missy."

She usually carries a cheese-box full of fruit or vegetables on her head, and above that a tray like a butler's with more merchandise; and balancing this load with no perceptible effort, she will deliver the most animated and funny remarks, gesturing constantly with both her hands. I asked her where I could see some rose-apples growing.

"I signify dat I has some myself, missus. You come right ovah de hill. You ahsk no questions *who* I am, *what* I am (dese folks show so much 'mosity, such bahd tempah). You see new shop—a flahg in de street, an' yet you ahsk no questions. You see town pump; dat's neighbah to me. You turn roun', you see my trees where I stops."

Another woman whom we all like is Ann Devins, a tall, stately, and always tidy person, who brings shells, Spanish work, sea-beans, curious bags made from jumby seeds, and flowers manufactured from the thin white epidermis of the yucca or Spanish



bayonet. These flowers are wonderfully beautiful and delicate, their thin, satiny substance looking like nothing ever before fashioned. Ann "stops" in a small, one-roomed, thatched cabin, and the other inmates of her dwelling are an aged husband, nearly crippled with rheumatism, a son, a grown-up daughter, and a grandson ten years old. The little room is full of chairs, stands, chests, and boxes, and the sides are hung thick with all kinds of cheap property.

"How old is Ellen?" we asked.

"Oh, she good age, Ellen is—she good age, an' such a good chile too. She broke de spine o' her back wen she little gairl—fell out de tree, an' wen she exert herself it rage bahd. Wen she feel her strenk in her, she wash, she scrub, she i'on, she sew, she do everyting; but she bahd dis mawnin'. Ellen i'on yes'day an' she all hot, an' she go poke her hade out o' a window, an' she on de bed now. Oh, I-so down-hearted to-day. She not sleep las' night with the pain in face an' on ear; all in de teefs too, but the mostest pain in de ear."

Dim memories of our native land and of the pangs of facial neuralgia stirred within us as we rummaged out our long-unused case of remedies, and put her up some belladonna, admiring Ann because she never begs or complains.

"Is it hard to live here?" we asked, having heard almost universal complaint from the colored people.

"Oh, no, missus; it easy foh pooh folks to live heah. We buy grits, four cents, five cents; we bile in pot to-day, an' some lef'. We buy de rice, four cent, five cent—it not all gone one day. We buy de fish cheap,

de conch, de welk. We has de fruit, an' we not often hungry, missus."

But I can understand that, even with so little fuel to buy, with food so cheap, and with fruit so abundant, life is by no means all sunshine. It is a hand-to-mouth existence, and countless evils flow from its irregularities and indiscretions. Too many fish are eaten and too much sugar-cane, while carelessness as to exposure or excess lays the foundations of consumption here in this perfect climate, where it seems as if people might live forever if they would obey the simplest laws of health.

Saturday Night, May 29.

All the week we have packed with more or less vigor, taking evening drives and rows and walks. At Lake Cunningham or Killarney—we suppose it to be the latter—on Tuesday I found the *Pteris aureum* growing up the trunks of scrub palmettoes. Benita has steadily painted on.

"Wat de wite lady doin', ma?" queried a small girl yesterday.

"Wy, don' you see, chile? She takin' de elmunts,—de aiah, de sky, de watah."

During this last month we have made the acquaintance of one exceedingly pleasant family, to whom we are indebted for many favors. We have learned much of the real inwardness of things here, where, just as the hymn says,

"Every prospect pleases,  
And only man is vile."

A transient visitor would behold only sunshine and beauty.

We are going home with our anticipations more than realized. The Mother is twenty years younger at least, our artist is no longer conscious of her throat, and gains daily in strength. Last Sunday she walked to church and back without much fatigue,—a longer distance than she has walked before in three years. It has been considerably warmer all this month, and I think the ordinary visitor to Nassau should leave about the first of May.

The event of the week has been our auction, which seems to the Mother a first-class joke. All her life-long she has given away superfluous property, but it seemed to us that we might sell some articles, and have enough left for gifts to our humble acquaintances. So the red flag waved, and the crowd assembled. And this is how auction goes in Nassau. If there is a large quantity of stuff, household or otherwise, to be disposed of, an extended notice is given in the two semi-weeklies. If not—and we were in the latter position—a man goes through the streets ringing the auction-bell. Those who have any curiosity call the man to a halt, and read the list of articles which he carries. Then, at the appointed time, the crowd gathers, and the affair is speedily over. To us it was a very funny sight. It was conducted by a most gentle and courtly auctioneer; nevertheless, one or both of us needed to be on the scene to preserve our steamer-chairs from sale; covetous eyes rested upon them as well as upon our California blanket. One sable aspirant to art opened negotiations for Benita's water-colors, but the price was an astonishment to him. Especially did I delight to hear folks

bid for a lamp that was a marvel of ugliness, for box-bureaus and for our primitive sideboard. We are to retain our goods till the steamer is sighted, and then, woe is me, away with our days of ease !

We are tired to-night, and glad that to-morrow is the day of rest. It is the general opinion that the *Santiago* will be in very early on Monday morning, and that we shall be away by noon. The Governor proclaims that he is going aboard at twelve o'clock. We earnestly hope that we may go off in the cool of the day, but in the mean time we will not worry.

June 2, 1886.

We are going across the Gulf Stream fast as steam and sails combined can carry us, and now I am to tell you briefly of that last day.

Cora brought in our breakfast at seven, but long before that our colored acquaintances presented themselves with full hands. Such another motley array I never saw. They brought cocoanuts, sapodillas, soursop, mangoes, lemons, limes, pines, mam-ees, egg fruit, tamarinds, benny cake, pomegranates, shells, bird-seed—and—"a hawg's tooth foh luck." We bestowed our overplus on Lemuel, and I dare say he is sick from cramming this very minute. Poor old Ellen wept copiously and said, "I not know you go to-day. I know—I brought you tings—fruit, nice dillies. I not know. I got no tings give you," but with hand on her heart, and then raised to Heaven, she said with dramatic fervor, "No tings give you—I give you Chris'." Old Jamaica came, and Abigail, and Martha, and Maria, and I know not who else.

Nor did they go again, but sat down in the gallery, as they call the veranda, real objects of woe.

A cooper came to head our barrels and cord a packing trunk. His name was Dean," he said, D-e-a-n-a-l-e-x-a-n-d-e-r. The wealthy drayman "wat owns a mule," had interviewed us on Saturday and came early for the first load. In a few minutes up came a negro from the Ward Office, politely inviting us to make out a bill of lading. Naturally we were unprepared for such an emergency, so we had to dress and rush off to pay a small sum for "extra baggage" and save a little bother. Along came the auctioneer to tell us that people would come for their goods at twelve. We flew around finishing the last packings, seeing the dozens of people who came on every sort of pretext, and all this time there sat those other people like a horrid nightmare. I could think of nothing but a country funeral, where curious folk go early and sit solemnly expectant. "Don't let me contain you, my deah dahlin'," said Aunt Jamaica as I passed her to take care of some fruit. I was most overcome by Drusilla, who sat just inside the door. She wore her best white dress, and a hat trimmed part way around with a narrow wisp of black alpaca. She sat motionless and mute hour after hour. When I looked at her she smiled very sweetly, but it was a relief when she drew her hat over her eyes and went to sleep.

At eleven the steamer was sighted, and in rushed the people pell-pell for their purchases. I insisted upon reserving our dining-table and four chairs, but I did it with great expenditure of words backed up

by eternal vigilance. We ate our dinner separately, three being required to keep an eye upon affairs, and my last waste of eloquence was made upon a stalwart negro, who insisted upon trying to squeeze himself and the table through the door at one and the same moment. I feel sure that the care of a house-servant or cook would have fretted me to a lath, for there is more of unbearable stupidity to the square yard in Nassau than on the globe elsewhere.

We ordered the carriage to come when the tug returned from the steamer. About once an hour a man came to announce that his partner was "guardin' de baggage." We had to go off to the auctioneer's office to receive the proceeds of our sale, and we changed the English money for American notes. We procured our return tickets, and then the tug came along over the water without a ghost of a whistle. I contemplated the mountain of baggage that waited, and patiently possessed my soul till we were ready to go on board together. There stood old Jamaica till the last, and her parting word was, "I hope I meet you in dis worl' again; if not, I pray I meet you in Parajise, o'Gawd." Lemuel came on board, and wept as he wished us "safe voyage."

Adieu now, my dear "five dozen." Make room for us again in your midst, and when next the cruel winter comes, "the winter of our discontent," let's all sail away and away to the land that has been tried and not found wanting, the Fortunate Isles—the land where it is always afternoon!

THE END.



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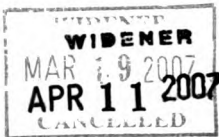




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